



"DEWEE"
CLINTON
PLEBE

WILLIAM O. STEVENS



Class PZ7

Book S846

P

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

"Pewee" Clinton, Plebe

"A BOOK EVERY MAN SHOULD READ AND
PLACE IN THE HANDS OF HIS SON."—*N.Y. Sun.*

A Short History of the United States Navy

By CAPTAIN GEORGE R. CLARK, U.S.N.
PROF. WM. O. STEVENS, Ph.D.,
INSTRUCTOR CARROLL S. ALDEN, Ph.D.,
INSTRUCTOR HERMAN F. KRAFFT, Ph.D.,
of the Department of English, U. S. Naval Academy.

"Here at last is a book over the
reading of which all real Americans
should thrill with honest pride."

—*Portland Oregonian.*

*With 16 full-page illustrations and many
pictures in the text. Large 12mo.
Cloth, \$3.00 net.*

J. B. Lippincott Company
Publishers Philadelphia



SO HE WAS HAULED ABOARD BY THE AID OF A BOATHOOK

"Pewee" Clinton, Plebe

A Story of Annapolis

By

WILLIAM O. STEVENS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
HERBERT PULLINGER



PHILADELPHIA & LONDON

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

1912

7-1
R 846
6 R

COPYRIGHT, 1912, BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

PUBLISHED, OCTOBER, 1912



PRINTED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
AT THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS
PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.

1.25

© Cl. A 327501

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. RECEIPT OF ORDERS.....	9
II. THE FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY.....	29
III. "GETTING ON TO THE ROPES".....	50
IV. DICK SPIKES HIS HAT.....	62
V. A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE.....	77
VI. AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND.....	93
VII. ON THE BUOY.....	112
VIII. THE ARMY GAME.....	131
IX. AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY.....	159
X. PLEBE CHRISTMAS.....	176
XI. THE MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION.....	191
XII. COVENTRY AND THE PEWEE.....	209
XIII. ZIM PLANS A FEAST.....	225
XIV. AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL.....	240
XV. THE PLEBE COXSWAIN.....	253
XVI. THE RACE WITH COLUMBIA.....	268
XVII. THE BILGER BILGES.....	286
XVIII. JUNE WEEK.....	298

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE	
SO HE WAS HAULED ABOARD BY THE AID OF A BOATHOOK.....		<i>Frontispiece</i> ✓
“SPEAKING OF SQUIRTS,” CHIRPED DICK, AS HE AIMED THE TORRENT SQUARELY INTO WENTWORTH’S SOLAR PLEXUS.....	84	✓
WENTWORTH WAS THE HERO OF THE DAY.....	156	✓
“ANY MAN WHO PUTS MAH FRIEND CLINTON IN COVENTRY KIN PUT ME THAR TOO”.....	219	✓
TO MAKE THAT FINISH DICK MADE HIS MEN PULL WITH EVERY OUNCE OF POWER IN THEM.....	281	✓

"Pewee" Clinton, Plebe

I

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

"HULLO, Dick, here's what you've been waitin' for, I guess!" called the postman, waving a long, brown envelope marked "Official Business," and the lad he was speaking to jumped from the doorstep like a hot popcorn and seized the letter with the greatest excitement.

"Hooray! it's my orders, come at last!—You're right," he added to the postman as he put the envelope in his breast pocket with sudden dignity. "I must report at Annapolis right away." Then, forgetting his official importance, he bounced into the house shouting:

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“Oh, Aunties, the orders have come! Stop, look, and listen!”

He could scarcely wait for the two aunts to drop their housekeeping duties in different parts of the house and come fluttering about him before he began declaiming:

U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.,
September 16, 19—

Sir:

You are hereby ordered to report to the Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy not later than the 20th instant.

Respectfully,
JAS. H. DICKINSON, *Lieutenant, U.S.N.*
By order of the Superintendent.

RICHARD C. CLINTON,
Skowhegan, Maine.

“Deary me,” sighed the younger of the two elderly ladies as she looked sadly at her nephew, “I don’t feel glad at all. You’ll have to go now, Dicky boy!”

“Yes,” assented the other, with a shake of the head, “but our bird must leave the nest some time.”

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

“Aw, say,” expostulated the boy with a shame-faced laugh, “I’m no Dicky bird, believe *me*! Shucks, you two said something like that when I went into long pants last spring!”

He braced back his shoulders and glanced at the mirror at the other end of the room. “You forget, ladies, that I’m a naval officer now. Avast! Port your hellum!” And he waved an imaginary cutlass. Whereupon the two aunts had to laugh in spite of themselves, and they bustled away quite cheerfully to get the boy’s outfit ready.

Dick himself dived out through the door and raced down the street to tell the good news to Mr. Hanson, the High School principal, who had helped him so much in preparing for the entrance examinations; and also, for that matter, to all of his acquaintances that he came across on the way. In fact, the entire town had been interested in the boy’s success in passing the examinations at Annapolis and winning the appointment the pre-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

vious June. There had been some hitch in the matter of his reporting at the Academy, and the fact had been subject for considerable gossip at the post-office and the sewing circles. Now that the orders had actually come, after the lad had waited for them all summer, there was a pleasant little flutter of excitement. There were times in Skowhegan when there was very little news.

Dick found everybody very congratulatory, from the High School principal—who slapped him on the back—to the janitor’s dog—the school mascot—who caught Dick’s high spirits and barked round his legs as excitedly as if he knew all about it. After a long and cordial chat with Mr. Hanson, Dick decided that he ought to tell his Uncle Tom, but somehow he did not feel so enthusiastic about that errand.

“He’ll kid me somehow, I’ll bet anything!” he said to himself as he walked through the familiar school grounds, mentally comparing the moth-eaten little patch of ground with the

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

velvety acres of the Naval Academy Yard. He had to admit, after a little reflection, that he was a bit afraid of Uncle Tom. He walked sedately along Main Street to his uncle's law offices, trying not to look too conscious of the news that was still bubbling up in him. Of course the story had already traveled faster than Dick's legs, and several of the people he met stopped him to wish him the best of luck in his new career.

The boy had to wait a few minutes till his uncle had finished some business with a client, during which he told the office boy the news. That young gentleman burst out with a "Gosh, but you must be smart!" of honest admiration. "I wisht a feller like me could——" he began wistfully.

Just then the door opened, letting out the client.

"Hullo, Dick!" called a hearty voice. "Come in!" Dick marched in, conscious of the pathetically admiring gaze of the office boy.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“Ha—ha! The orders have come, have they?”

“Why how did you know, sir?” answered the nephew rather taken aback at having the news guessed “right off the bat.”

“Nothing else could make you strut like that!” laughed Uncle Tom. “Fine. The sooner you get there, the better. Ever since you got that appointment you’ve been a Prominent Citizen, and it’s a bad thing to be a Prominent Citizen all summer. But unless the Naval Academy is run on a mollycoddle basis nowadays, you won’t be a P. C. very long after you get there. Not for awhile! Eh?”

“Well, Uncle Tom, you’re something of a Prominent Citizen yourself!” retorted Dick feebly. He hated that word mollycoddle. Somehow he could never get into conversation with Uncle Tom without running into that word. The latter chuckled for a moment as he watched his nephew’s face, and then he

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

jumped from his chair, and pulled down his hat.

“Come on Dick, I’m going to lunch at your house to-day and see you get properly packed up. You’ll have to start to-morrow morning on the ten o’clock. I’ll work out the connections for you through to Annapolis and send you a memorandum this evening.”

As they walked away, Uncle Tom continued to give his nephew practical points on the journey, for Dick had never traveled so far before, and went on advising him to scratch gravel as hard as he could, from the minute he arrived at the Academy, in order to make good. Dick didn’t listen very closely to all of this, for advice—and very prosaic advice at that—isn’t interesting compared with the visions he had of himself in uniform, pacing the deck of a Dreadnought, saluted by the sailors, the admiration of the girls, perhaps some day winning a great battle and becoming the idol of the nation!

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Uncle Tom noticed the faraway look and laughed. “See here, boy, a lot of people I know are willing to pay me for my advice. Pull your head down from the clouds and take what you are getting for nothing! Hullo, Hester!” he called to the elder of the aunts who stood beaming in the doorway, “I’m coming to lunch with you and the Young Farragut!”

Dick continued to dream during the meal, and escaped as soon as he could to his little den on the third floor, where he could enjoy his excited anticipations and hopes without interruption. When the table was cleared, Uncle Tom announced that he was going to oversee the packing of Dick’s trunk.

“It’s all done!” exclaimed Aunt Hester triumphantly.

“We were afraid, brother, that you would say that!” added the other with a knowing shake of the head.

“Never mind, girls,” answered the undaunted Thomas, “I’m going to pack it my-

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

self if necessary.” And he threw off his coat with a flourish.

“Oh, do be careful, Tom; there’s the trunk out in the hall. Just strap it up and be a dear.”

“Couldn’t be a dear, Hester, if I tried,” laughed the trouble-maker. “Look here, where’s that steamer trunk of mine that I sent over here for the boy? What are you doing with this?”

“It couldn’t hold!” was the protesting reply from both sisters at once. Their brother threw open the lid of the big old-fashioned trunk with a flourish of disgust.

“Look!” he cried, pointing to the fashion plates on the lining of the cover representing beautiful ladies in the styles of 1870, “what do you suppose the other middies would say when they saw that? They’d guy that poor kid into his grave. He’s going to get all he can stand as it is. What’s this?” he added, pulling out something that lay neatly folded on the top.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“It’s Dicky’s chamois-skin chest protector,” explained Aunt Jennie, “you know it’s very damp where they live, right on Chesapeake Bay——”

The sentence ended in a plaintive “Oh-h, *Tom!*” as the protector was flung into the farthest corner of the room.

“A dozen outing shirts!” snorted the irate Thomas diving into the trunk. “Mufflers! Ear tabs! Camphorated oil! A hot-water bottle!!” At each exclamation the indignant man rooted out the article named and hurled it upon the growing pile in the corner.

“What’s this? A diary! Good heavens, girls, why didn’t you throw in the parlor organ? More books! ‘Memoirs of Adoniram Judson’! ‘Daily Thoughts for Daily Needs’!——”

“Stop, Thomas; he *must* have some good books in his room!” and Aunt Hester wrung her hands.

“I’ve looked into the matter of that naval Academy, and I tell you regulations won’t

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

allow it," replied the brother placidly, as he slung the books upon the pile in the corner. "Nor pictures, either!" he added as he came upon "Napoleon at St. Helena" and "Farragut Lashed to the Rigging."

"But those are his favorite pictures!"

"I tell you again, the regulations don't permit one; take 'em away!"

The good aunts were reduced almost to tears by their brother's drastic overhauling, but he went calmly ahead, put all the outfit Dick needed into the smaller trunk, snapped it together and marched away to the office. Such was the authority of the masterful Thomas in that household that his sisters didn't dream of meddling with the locked trunk. After an outpouring of indignation between themselves, they carried away the pile of offending articles in the corner and put them back in their original places.

Dick stayed up in his den most of the afternoon, but he was on hand when the local evening paper arrived. Sure enough! There

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

was a whole half column of flattering stuff about him. Of course a good deal had been reprinted from the article that came out in June when he won his appointment, but it said in conclusion that “our popular and distinguished young fellow-citizen will leave on the ten o’clock train to-morrow, and doubtless he will be given a salvo of farewells and good wishes there by a host of his friends.”

“I wonder if they really will?” thought Dick, with an elation that he couldn’t help feeling. “Uncle Tom needn’t think that he’s the only Prominent Citizen in this burg!”

He was so excited and impatient to get started toward Annapolis that he hurt his two kind aunts, who had mothered him ever since his babyhood, by cutting his good-bys short and starting early for the train. Furthermore he had asked them not to see him off at the station because he knew that they would spoil all his fun by crying. If there was to be a send-off, he wanted it to be cheerful.

“I wonder if any of the High School crowd

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

will really turn out to see me off?" he said to himself as he started rapidly up the street with his suit-case. Sure enough, just as he turned the corner he saw a group of his classmates waiting for him. They trooped noisily about him, laughing, joking, warning him not to get hazed, and all at the top of their lungs. It was a grand "jolly." Dick felt like a crown prince, for he was the centre of it all, and though many of the fellows were joshing him as a "future Admiral" and giving him mock salutes, he knew that every one of them envied him. It was fine!

There was considerable time before the train pulled out, and with every minute came fresh arrivals, some out of pure curiosity, and others, who had known Dick ever since he was born, had a kindly desire to wish him good luck. Among the later arrivals was Mr. Hanson, who shook his hand heartily and wished him the best possible success at Annapolis.

"One of these days," thought Dick, "I'll

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

be a Rear Admiral, and he'll be still teaching school probably.” He began to feel rather sorry for Mr. Hanson and for the rest of his fellow-townsmen as well, who were doomed to lead such quiet and obscure lives in this little Maine town.

Then he noticed the reporter going round with a pencil stub in his fingers, and craning his neck in every direction to get names for the “among those present” in his write-up of the occasion. Suddenly a slight commotion took place on the outskirts of the crowd and they moved back respectfully to make room for the Hon. William Tecumseh Sherman Larribee, Congressman from the district. The Hon. Mr. Larribee had been with considerable difficulty persuaded into giving Dick even an “alternate” appointment. He had given “principal” to young Foster, whose father was a lumber king; but Foster had failed dismally in the examinations, thus making way for Dick who had passed. Yet from the way the Congressman beamed on

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

Dick as he came towards him with outstretched hand, a bystander would have thought that he had picked out Dick for that appointment and Dick alone.

Mr. Larribee would not have missed an occasion like this for worlds. It was still warm, unusually so for September, but he wore a heavy frock coat and a black felt hat. He cleared his throat resoundingly.

“Friends and fellow townsmen!” he began, turning his back on Dick and facing the crowd. It was in the Congressman’s most oratorical tones and the fellows looked about furtively for comfortable places to rest, for they knew that a speech was forthcoming.

“It gives me great pleasure,” continued the Congressman, mounting a handy soap box and smiling graciously, “to add my humble treebute to the chorus of good wishes and high hopes offered here this morning to our distinguished young fellow-citizen.” He waved a hand at Dick, who tried to look unconcerned, and the reporter scratched paper like

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

mad to keep up. A few of the older members of the group, including Mr. Hanson, quietly went home.

“He goes to-day to don the uniform of the fin-est na-vee in—the—world, to add, perhaps, a glorious page under his own name to the peer-less record of that na-vee, ever in the cause of, and for the honor of, the g-r-randest nation on—the—face—of—the—globe!”

Dick joined in the applause of this beautiful sentiment. “Pretty fine oratory!” he thought. “Oh shucks! There’s Uncle Tom butting in over there and grinning like a Cheshire cat.” Uncle Tom seemed to be enjoying an amusing conversation with Murphy, the baggage handler. “And furthermore, sir,” continued the orator, “speaking for my honored consteetueents, of this the glorious —th district, we look confidently to you to represent us with—honor—and—distinction in the famous naval school at Annapolis—as we feel sure you will. And, speaking as a citizen, I con-grat-u-late you,

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

sir, as being the first to represent our fair city at that school. Thus let it be said when the din—of—some—might-y—battle—shall—reveal—you—the—victor, with the gulorious stars and stripes waving unsullied and triumphant over you—let it be said, I say, ‘this was a son of Skowhegan! This was——’ ”

Bump! Murphy’s truck had trundled up behind, unobserved, with a load of trunks aboard, and somehow hit the corner of the Hon. Mr. Larribee’s soap box with such force that it nearly spilled the orator upon his back. A burst of unfeeling laughter came from the audience.

“Excuse me, sorr,” was Murphy’s only reply to Mr. Larribee’s black look and muttered execration, but the old Irishman’s eyes twinkled wickedly. The Congressman, however, was too old a politician not to have had experience with all sorts of jolts. With a tremendous effort the sunny smile was restored to the flushed face and he was going to try to finish his speech, when the warning

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

clang of a locomotive's bell turned all attention toward the coming train and he suddenly faded out of sight. The school friends crowded round Dick with another chorus of friendly yells and good-bys. Suddenly he felt a familiar hand on his shoulder. It was Uncle Tom.

“Good-by and good luck, Dick! Make good!” And he was gone.

In a few minutes the train was under way. “Now at last,” thought Dick, “I’m really on my way to Annapolis!”

He looked out of the car window at the gorgeous landscape, with the early autumn reds and yellows of the trees through which the Kennebec went brawling over its rocky bed. But he was too busy with his thoughts to see anything.

“Jingo!” he suddenly exclaimed. “I’ll bet old Murphy’s bumping act was a put-up job by Uncle Tom. Hang it all, why did he always want to spoil the pleasure of everything? One of these days, by jiminy, I’ll

RECEIPT OF ORDERS

invite him on board my ship and tell him what I think of how he used to pick on me. Uncle Tom never had much use for Mr. Larribee; I wonder why? That was a fine speech, and all in my honor, too!" Dick couldn't help feeling tickled at the idea of being the hero of the hour.

It proved to be a long, tedious journey. There was just one more pleasant thrill in it and that was his discovery in a copy of the Portland "Press" that he bought on the train, of an interesting paragraph tucked away in the column of "News from the State." "Richard Cary Clinton," it ran, "nephew of the Hon. Thos. Clinton, of Skowhegan, had received his orders to report immediately to the Naval Academy. Young Clinton is the first to represent Skowhegan at Annapolis; he is only sixteen years of age, and is regarded as an unusually bright scholar."

Pretty fine that! And in the Portland paper, too! Dick carefully cut out the passage with his penknife and slipped it into his

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

pocket-book. He would mail it back to his aunts, and they would show it to Uncle Tom; trust them for that!

Then, until he climbed into his berth in the sleeper at Boston, he gave himself up to day-dreaming over his future career in the great naval school. He had been in Annapolis only a week when he took the examinations, but he could shut his eyes and see those huge granite buildings, the awe-inspiring officers, with the gold star and braid on their sleeves, the broad parade ground where he could imagine long lines of midshipmen marching and deploying like a great machine to the gay strains of the Marine Band. The upper classes were all away on their cruise then, but they would soon be coming back now, and there would be all sorts of fine friendships to make and jolly things to do. All this unalloyed delight lay just ahead.

“In another day or so, Dick Clinton,” said he to himself, “you’ll be a part of all that yourself!”

II

THE FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

ANNAPOLIS, in September, can be a shade hotter than a blast furnace, and on this particular afternoon the "Colonial City" was trying to beat its own record. A perspiring and cinder-streaked lad was walking slowly over the hot bricks of the sidewalk, followed by a small darky tugging at a heavy suitcase. Dick was in Annapolis at last!

As they rounded the corner and the boy saw the gate of the Naval Academy, only a few rods distant, he stopped for a minute to mop his face with the moist and murky handkerchief he had tucked up his sleeve, carefully arranged his hair, readjusted his straw hat, squared his shoulders, and marched ahead with as military an air as possible. A young woman, fanning herself on a stoop,

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

took in these details with an amused smile. The new Plebe looked up just in time to catch that smile, and flushed painfully through his freckles.

“Well, what are you snickering at?” he snapped at the grinning negro behind him.

“Nawthin’, suh,” replied the gentleman of color instantly, drawing in the slack of a wide smile. Considering that at least something had been done for the sake of dignity, Dick entered the gate. In spite of the heat he walked very fast for fear some one would call him down for not saluting, as he had a suspicion that the marine sentry was an upper-classman whom he ought to salute. Good! Nobody even noticed him. Now for the Superintendent’s office, and then to be a “future Admiral!”

When the orderly ushered him into the presence of the Superintendent himself, the new Plebe lost all his courage. A tall, erect figure, in immaculate white uniform, every inch of him an admiral, looked down on a

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

small, very grubby youngster who was the picture of nervousness.

"Your name?"

"Richard Cary Clinton, sir."

"Age?"

"Sixteen years and four months, sir."

"Your height?" came the unexpected question.

"Sir? Oh, five feet two and one-eighth, sir."

If the gray moustaches twitched a bit at the fraction of an inch the new Plebe would never have seen it, for his eyes rose no higher than the Superintendent's knees.

"Raise your right hand!" and young Clinton thereupon swore without the slightest hesitation to defend the Constitution against all its enemies, domestic and foreign.

"Now report to the Officer-in-Charge, Bancroft Hall," concluded the Superintendent with a gesture toward the door.

"Yes, sir, I mean aye, aye, sir," stammered Dick blushing like fire, and he lost no time in

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

getting away from that awe-inspiring presence. For weeks he had imagined meeting the Superintendent and other officers. He was going to preserve a “manly, military bearing,” and whip out “aye, aye, sir,” as saltily as any boatswain in Marryat. He had practised it, too, in imaginary conversations, and here he’d gone and got all fussed! Must have looked like a blamed fool! By George, he’d make that grinning nigger stand round, anyway. A fellow in the navy has got to learn to command.

“Wake up!” he admonished his baggage carrier, who was sitting on the bag and dozing in the shade of the terrace. It was “future admiral” Clinton’s best quarter-deck voice, but the darky was very slow in unfolding himself to a standing position.

“Looka hyah, mistah, ah ain’t gwine carry yo’ bag to Bancroft Hall widout yo’ gimme another quarter.”

“Get out, you black robber,” sputtered Dick, “I’ll carry it myself!”

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

“Ah don’ believe you’ kin,” drawled the Ethiop, parading all his teeth. “Yo’ sut-tinly is de smalles’ Plebe ah ever seen.”

After all, it is below one’s dignity to answer an impertinent colored person. Besides, Clinton couldn’t think of anything sufficiently deadly to say. He boiled to think of that High School essay of his that he had been so proud of, “Are the negroes really free?” They were entirely too free.

Thanks to obliging watchmen and marines, Clinton at last found his way to the Officer-in-Charge, who assigned him a room on the third floor, or “deck,” as he called it, and gave him a fearful list of things to get from the Midshipmen’s Store. This last proved a long and tiresome job, and it was nearly two hours of steady work before the room was ready. He had lugged his mattress, water pitcher, slop-jar, broom,—everything in his outfit,—from the store up three flights of stairs to the little cell he was to occupy. Then he followed his instructions as best he

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

could by sweeping the room and putting everything in order. During all this process so many fellows had cracked jokes at him, that he pretended he didn't hear, and he never would have finished arranging his furniture according to regulations if some of his classmates hadn't turned to and helped him out.

What a day it had been! A douse in the shower bath made him feel better, but when he saw himself in his working suit, which he would have to wear until his service uniform could be made, he began to wonder why he had ever gone into the navy. It's awful to make a fellow look so ridiculous! The suit, although the smallest in the store, was still too big every way, and its stiff, yellowish drilling gave him the feeling of being done up in slats and burlap.

“All fixed?” called a cheery voice. It was one of the fellows who had helped him and the best of the lot, he thought.

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

"I guess so," answered Dick, brightening; "come in!"

"I didn't tell you, but my name is Conried Zimmerman. Don't ask me if I was made in Germany; I get peevish. 'Dutch' has been my fate so long that I'll consider it a personal favor if you'll call me Zim."

"Sure. I'm Dick Clinton," and the two shook hands.

"What brought you to this reform school?" continued Zim. "It's a question you'll be asking yourself before the day is over, and I thought I'd get ahead of you." He grinned mischievously at Dick's tired face.

"Why," replied the other, somewhat taken aback, "I wanted to be a naval officer and—serve my country."

Zim laughed. "I love my country, but oh you brass buttons!" Then, as he saw Dick's sheepish grin, he went on about himself. "Well, *I* came here because I was stage-struck."

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“You?” laughed Dick, eyeing the plump and comical face. “Somehow you don’t look like a matinee hero.” He was glad to get back one on his teasing acquaintance.

Zim, however, grinned cheerfully as ever. “Nope. Low comedy is my line. I used to do a lot in amateur theatricals, and one day I got an offer to go on the boards at a salary. Well, my old man is a brewer, and when he heard of my dreams he went up in the air like a teacher on a thumb tack. He gave me the choice of going into the brewery, passing the exams for Annapolis, or getting fired from home to make a living for myself. That’s why I’m here to fight for my country. My uncle is in the navy, too. He was here on duty last year while I was ‘prepping’ for the entrance exams, and he put me wise to a lot of things, you bet. Say, what makes you so late in reporting here?”

“A fellow from my district that ought to have graduated last June was held over for

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

deficiencies, and of course there wasn't any vacancy for me until he got his diploma. I've been waiting all summer for orders to come, and I began to think they never would let him graduate."

"Jiminy, but you were in luck! You've missed three hot, sticky months spent in every kind of fool drill that blistered your paws and broke your back." Zim sighed, for he was plump and not given to exertion. "And three months of plain and fancy cus-sin'-out, the like of which would make the crew of a tramp steamer mutiny."

"But I feel so out of everything. You fellows are onto the ropes now, and have made friends with each other in the class——"

"Hullo, Wentworth!" interrupted Zim, as some one paused in the corridor to look in at the half-open door. The stranger nodded carelessly and stepped inside. He was a finely built fellow of nineteen, handsome as a Greek god, but with the air of one who had

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

been very completely informed as to his charms.

“Who’s the little squirt?” he began under his breath, looking at Clinton.

“Cheese it, Went!” expostulated Zim in a whisper. Then, aloud, “This is another classmate of ours, Clinton, from Maine. He’s just come to-day.”

“From the —th district?” asked Wentworth, showing a flash of interest. “Yes,” answered Dick as he grasped a rather patronizing hand.

Wentworth released his hand suddenly and scowled. “What became of Foster? He was the principal from that district. A fine fellow with a fine football record, too. He and I were in the same boarding house all last year out in town. I took my exams in April and he in June, and I never knew what became of him.”

“He failed in the math subjects,” said the other, feeling rather uncomfortable.

“Good Lord, and *you* got in!” sneered

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

Wentworth, eyeing scornfully the other's "five feet two and one-eighth inches" smothered in the ill-fitting drill suit. Then he turned on his heel and flung out of the room.

For the fortieth time that miserable day Dick turned hot with mortification and anger. Zim also turned red and scowled at the retreating figure.

"Don't mind him, old man," he said soothingly. "I knew Went all last year; we prepped at the same school, and he's really all right at heart. There are just two things the matter with him, he has a rich and doting mother, and he's a corking athlete. All she lives for is her darling Harold, and all he lives for is himself and football. Instead of knocking the conceit out of him here, the coaches and the upper classmen of the football squad 'spoon' on him, and all our class bow down and lick his shoes because he's the only Plebe that's sure of making the team."

"He's certainly got rotten manners," growled Clinton.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“Yep, I never knew him quite so unfit for publication. I only wish I was big enough to lick him. You know in the good old days when my uncle was in the Academy, they used to haze the conceit out of a fellow like that and make a man of him. But now an upper classman is afraid to say a word when a Plebe gets fresh and raty, because if he so much as looked cross-eyed at us he’d get fired for hazing. Why I can go——”

Suddenly Zim sprang to his feet at silent and rigid attention, facing the wall. Where Zim could go, Dick never learned, but he hastily imitated his example. The door was pushed open and three upper classmen, members of the football squad, stood in the room.

“Here’s that Frankfurter,” remarked the biggest of the group, who, Dick afterwards learned was the football captain. Evidently he spoke of Zim. “Have you learned your lesson?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Zim meekly.

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

“Who’s the meanest man in the navy?”

“My uncle.”

“Who has a fat, good-for-nothing slob of a nephew in the Plebe class?”

“My uncle.”

“All right; now you are sadder Budweiser. Laugh!”

“Ha-ha!” cackled Zim feebly.

“Louder!”

“*Ha-ha-ha!!*”

“That’s better. Now beat it to your room.”

“Aye aye, sir,” was the humble response, and Conried vanished. Dick thought that the scene was such a good joke on his new acquaintance that his shoulders shook with laughter. But his turn followed.

“I was informed,” continued the captain to Dick as he measured him with his eye, “that there was a new Plebe in this room who was promising football material.” Saying this, he and his friends seated themselves on convenient pieces of furniture, but as

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Clinton made a move to do the same he was called back to attention by a warning finger.

“In the navy a subordinate doesn’t take a seat in the presence of ranking officers until he is directed to do so.”

The three visitors then eyed the comical figure half-smothered in the big yellow working suit for a full minute in solemn silence. Dick cleared his throat uneasily. He felt in the presence of these fellows very much like a buckshot in a bag of marbles.

“I *have* played football,” he ventured faintly in order to break the awkward silence.

“Good,” said the captain gravely; “tell us about it. Only don’t forget ‘sir’ in addressing your superiors.”

“Last year I was substitute quarter on the Skowhegan High School team—sir.”

“Kindly repeat that name slowly and distinctly.” Dick had to do it three times because the others had such difficulty in catching it.

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

“And you did pretty good work, I suppose?” suggested the captain encouragingly.

“Yes, sir,—I think fairly so, sir,” stammered the Plebe, not knowing what to say, and growing very red in the face.

“We’ll have to remember that and tell the head coach,” continued the visitor, and his companions nodded gravely. “Report tomorrow afternoon on the football field and some one will assign you to one of the teams. Now let’s see how much you weigh.” Suiting action to the word, he picked Clinton up and stood him on the table. “Not quite the requisite number of pounds, I’m afraid. Now, Bug, you see what you think.” And “Bughouse” Boothby the fullback, attempting the task, swore that he couldn’t do it. He staggered as he bore aloft the uncomfortable Plebe, and then in some unaccountable way he let go. Dick fell upon the edge of the table, knocking the stencil ink over the open regulation book, and landed heavily on the floor.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“Ah, ah, that’s bad form!” frowned the captain. “A football player falls better than that. I must write to the coach of the—what’s the place?”

“Skow-he-gan,” chanted the other two slowly.

“Sure, Skow-he-gan—High—School—football—team.” Whereupon the three filed out of the room, leaving Dick on the floor, rubbing his elbows in a daze. The sight of the spilled ink awoke him to energy, and while he was painfully sopping up the stains, the friendly features of Zim framed themselves once more in the doorway.

“Jiminy, how did you do that?”

Dick told him.

“Well, you’ll frap the pap right at the start.”

“What’s that?”

“Frapping, or hitting, the pap means getting on the report with a bunch of demerits, see?”

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

“Suppose I just told the officers how it happened? ’Twasn’t my fault.” Dick resented the injustice of the thing.

“What? You wouldn’t *tell* on those fellows? Jiminy, you wouldn’t last a week in this place if you did. ‘Take your medicine and shut your mouth’ is the working motto for this place. Why when my uncle was a Plebe, some upper classmen came in, peeled his clothes off and sat him in his wash-basin—cold water, too. And they made him row with matches instead of oars. While they were encouraging him, every man of ’em was smoking. Well, when they had gone, and he was just pulling on his clothes, a discipline officer poked his head in the doorway and papped him good and hard for being undressed and for evidences of smoking. Of course he had to take it.”

Just then the bugle sounded. “Bugle’s busted for supper,” remarked Zim; “come on to formation.”

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Soon the new Plebe found himself at his first formation, and marched off with his classmates to the mess hall. For the first time since entering he felt fairly comfortable. The supper was plain but good, there were no upper classmen at his table to scare him, and the chaff of his neighbors was only of a good-natured sort. With the comfortable feeling of fullness under his belt, Dick's courage rose again.

He returned to his room to continue his labors on the spilled ink, and, when that job was done, to study the bewildering number of regulations in the blue “Reg.” book that he was told he must know by heart. At eight the bugle “busted” again, and Zim called him out to join the formation for the manual of arms drill in the Armory.

A young lieutenant had the battalion in his charge, and he got what amusement he could out of a boresome duty.

“Shoulda—a—*humps!* Look here, young gentlemen, you still hold your rifles as if

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

they were pitchforks. Try to remember that you are engaged in a military exercise and not making hay." At this some ladies forming an audience in the gallery tittered.

"Brace up now," continued the officer, "don't mind those girls, the same ones snickered up there when I was a Plebe."

"Por-r-t—put that man on the *report*!" he shouted, levelling his forefinger like a pistol at Dick, who had unluckily shifted his weapon before the word "arms."

The lad's inexperience at once marked him in the lieutenant's critical eye more distinctly than his working suit as one of those stragglers that gave so much trouble after the rest of the class had been licked into shape.

"What's the matter with you, Pewee? You heave that weapon as if you were moving furniture!"

"I just came to-day, sir," explained Dick timidly.

"Pipe down!" roared the drillmaster, "the navy wants *results* not excuses! You re-

“ PEWEE ” CLINTON, PLEBE

member that ; and, if you can't, get somebody to tattoo it on your person. Return your rifle to its place, if you can do it without help, and go back to quarters. I'll arrange a kindergarten class for you later.”

Dick obeyed sullenly, and he waited for no bugle call to throw himself on his bed. Tired as he was by the hard day, the thought of his harder experiences kept him for a long while wide-awake. All his life as far as he could remember, everything had been made easy for him by his two aunts who had taken him when he was an orphaned baby and devoted themselves to him ever since. True, Uncle Tom used to poke fun at him a lot, but then he was never unkind and he had worked hard for Dick's chance to enter the Academy. Only two days before Dick had been a town hero. From his fond aunts to Congressman Larribee he had received nothing but those delicious flatteries that come with success and fame. Then what a fearful drop ! Ever since entering the Academy yard he had had noth-

FIRST DAY IN THE ACADEMY

ing but cruel ridicule, from the fresh little nigger who carried his bag to the lieutenant who called him "Pewee" before the whole class. He felt sore and homesick, and if there was something hot and salty in his eyes, too, it would not be surprising.

III

“GETTING ON TO THE ROPES”

THE first note of reveille awoke Dick with a start. It was 6.30 and a sleepy hour to get up, but he realized that he was now in a life that gave a man no chance to follow his own inclinations. A cold shower and a good rub down put new life into him.

“By George, I’ll get there yet!” he told his reflection in the glass, and he found his place at breakfast formation with as experienced an air as any of his classmates. It was Saturday morning, and it fell to Dick’s company to perform a sailing drill in the cutters. These are great, heavy round-bottomed boats which are clumsy to row and clumsier to sail.

When he saw them hanging at their davits under the boat sheds, he wondered what on earth he was supposed to do; but he looked

“GETTING ON TO THE ROPES”

on attentively, telling himself that he should know all about it next time. The men were divided into boat's crews at the sheds. The coxswain of his climbed nimbly into the swinging cutter, made her ready, and then shouted, “Lower away, together!”

The stroke oarsmen attended to the lowering, and as soon as the boat hit the water the crew tumbled in. So far Dick had got along all right, but when the coxswain bawled, “Stand by to toss!” Dick wondered anxiously what on earth he was expected to toss. Then, when the order came to “toss,” his oar came up a whole second after the rest. Similarly with the next orders, “Stand by to let fall!” “Let fall!” his heavy oar wobbled in place so awkwardly and so long after the rest that he suddenly heard “a regular sea-goin’ crossin’ out” hurled at his head by a familiar voice. He looked up in dismay to recognize in the officer who was in charge of the drill that sarcastic lieutenant of the evening before. Already, Dick discovered he

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

was “Pewee” to the rest of the class, and the hated name stuck.

He was glad indeed when the coxswain called “way enough!” and the crew stopped rowing to make sail. Dick made himself as small as possible and simply tried not to be in the way. It is no small task to step the masts and make sail, and Dick looked on in awe as the coxswain of his cutter bawled his orders and the crew performed the feat.

His entire water experience consisted of swimming in the Kennebec River, but by allowing his boatmates to do what was necessary, and bearing a hand himself whenever they told him what to do, he got along very well through the drill and had hopes of finishing without further disgrace.

During the drill the breeze died away and rose and fell again in faint and uncertain gusts. The members of the boats’ crews were instructed to keep a bright lookout for the shifting wind and note its direction. The lieutenant’s boat surged alongside the cutter

“GETTING ON TO THE ROPES”

Dick was in, and, though the latter hid himself as best he could, he could not escape the officer's eye. A sudden puff of wind from an unlooked for direction rippled across the water.

“Where's the wind now? Yes, I'm talking to you, little one; come, bear a hand about it!”

“Sir,” stammered the Pewee, flustered to death but determined to die game, “the wind's — er — chopped round — er — to *lee-ward*, sir.”

The shout that rose from this reply startled the lookout on the old frigate *Santee*, lying on its mud bed half a mile away. Some mischievous hand loosed a jib sheet, and the sail that Dick was leaning against gave way and let the unfortunate youngster head-first into the water.

Now there was one thing that he could do well, and that was swim. Afterwards he thought of the fine joke that he might have played on the lieutenant and all those laugh-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

ing fellows by diving under the keel of the cutter and coming up gently on the other side and waiting for them to get scared looking for him to come up. But when you don't have time to take breath, you come right up blowing without stopping to think about it. So he was hauled aboard by the aid of a boathook in his collar, to the great joy of all beholders. The drill went on, and by the time it was over the Pewee's clothes were sun-dried, but the jokes over his nautical break were still being cracked.

“What's the ill wind that blows nobody good?” was a favorite gag. Then a chorus would roar, “The wind that chops round to *leeward*, sir!” mimicking the lad's high tones in a way that would have made a saint get up on his hind legs and swear. It was awful! Dick tried to grin but it was a painful effort. He felt mad at the lieutenant, mad at the fellows who laughed at him, and mad at himself for making the “bust.”

“GETTING ON TO THE ROPES”

“Aw, gowan!” Zim broke in at the mess table when the chant about the “ill wind” started again. “You fellows made busts just as bad when you first came, and don’t you forget it. Wentworth, who was it that said a half-rater was ‘beating it’ to windward, and that ‘the stern sheets are the ropes that mustn’t be belayed’?”

Wentworth, who had started the anthem at a neighboring table, flushed and scowled, and the others were ready enough to turn the laugh on a fellow who had already been labelled “stuck on himself.” Dick ate the rest of his dinner in peace, and gave Zim a look that spelled gratitude in big letters.

“By George, you were a Jim Dandy to help me out,” he said to his friend when they were at liberty again.

“Cheese it,” replied Zim, embarrassed at having anybody thank him, “come on and see football practice, they’re going to try out a bunch of Plebes this afternoon.”

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“I don’t know quite what to do,” answered Dick, “the captain told me yesterday to report on the field to-day.”

“He did? Shucks, he was running you!”

“Maybe,” admitted the other a bit nettled at Zim’s opinion, “but I played substitute quarter on the High School team last year.”

“Well,” said Zim, “I’m going to sit in this corner of the bleachers, if you want to find me later.”

Clinton walked on to the edge of the field where the men were gathering sluggishly in football togs. It was still too hot to play. He decided to stand around where he could be seen and if the captain didn’t order him to get into a suit and join the squad, why he’d go back and sit with Zim. In a few minutes the captain came along doing some fancy juggling with a football in one hand. The ball dropped, and as he stooped to pick it up his eye fell on Dick.

“You told me to report here, sir,” said the Pewee.

“GETTING ON TO THE ROPES”

“You’re that new Plebe from Skow—something? Hey, Bug, kindly assign this quarter-back to one of the teams.”

Bughouse Boothby, who was lounging on a bench, eyed the boy thoughtfully and then strode toward the end of the gridiron, followed by the joyfully expectant Clinton.

“I’ll show Zim,” he said to himself; “I’m not much on size but I’m speedy!”

Just beyond the gridiron a knot of officers’ children were going through the evolutions of football practice with much noise and enthusiasm. “These,” said Boothby, pointing to the little fellows, “are the ‘Navy Juniors.’ I think you will have no trouble in making quarter-back——” But Dick was already on the run.

Having got in the lee of the bleachers, he sneaked under them to avoid Zim’s seeing him, and then darted off toward quarters.

First he laid in a supply of Naval Academy note-paper with a gilt Academy seal at the top and then spread himself at his table to

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

begin writing home all about it. He had expected to wait till Sunday, but he felt that he must relieve his feelings right away. Page after page his fountain pen scratched over in the dismal story of how he had been treated. He had come anxious to do his best and be friends with everybody, and almost every one—except Zim—treated him like a fool. It wasn't fair!

As he described that long string of humiliations he had suffered ever since he entered, he felt so sorry for himself that he began to feel a pathetic lump in his throat. He could see in his mind's eye his aunts crying over the way their poor boy was being treated.

Bing! Dick jumped as Zim's plump figure bounced in immediately after the thumping knock on the door.

“Football practice did not keep you very long, I see?”

Dick shuffled his feet and grinned sheepishly.

“Look here, old man, don't *you* go to run-

“GETTING ON TO THE ROPES”

ning me. I'm so sore now that I can't stand any more.”

“Shucks, I wish you could hear the stories my uncle can tell about running Plebes in his day. Why, we are *coddled*——”

“Hang your old uncle!” began Dick, when suddenly Zim's eye fell on the twelve pages of sadness scattered about the desk. Dick caught the twinkle in Zim's eye, and hastily, but with a careless air, collected the sheets and stuffed them into the drawer.

“Looks as if you had been telling somebody the whole sad story.”

“Well, what if I have?” snorted the other who was on the verge of being angry.

“Speaking of uncles,” continued the other diplomatically, “tell me something about your Uncle Tom you spoke of yesterday. I got the impression that he's the same old cock my uncle is, of whom you spoke so impolitely. And yours got you into the Academy as mine did me.” Dick was on the point of repeating “Who's the meanest man

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

in the navy?” but something in Zim’s friendly tone led him to swallow the jibe unsaid.

“Well,” he replied, “he’s as fine a country lawyer as there is in New England; and more than once they wanted him to run for Congress. He’s been mighty good to me and I’m proud of him all right, but—somehow I never was as crazy about him as you are about yours.”

As Zim’s face looked a question mark, his friend continued his burst of confidence. “It’s because—I don’t know—he never seemed to care a continental when I got a 99 in algebra or was elected class orator, or did anything like that. The only times he ever warmed up were when I went out for football and when I passed the exams here last June. The rest of the time he’d tease me about being a ‘mollycoddle’ or ‘teacher’s pet.’ He’d want to know when I was going to grow up, and several times he threatened to make me work on his farms during haying time.”

“GETTING ON TO THE ROPES”

“I’ll bet anything that letter of yours isn’t addressed ‘Dear Uncle Tom’!” laughed Zim. “I’m going down to the gym for a dip in the pool before supper. So long!”

Dick sat eyeing his table moodily for several minutes after his friend had left. “Mollycoddle?” What sort of a man’s business was this whimpering to his aunts who would only worry over his silly troubles? It came mighty hard, but finally he drew those twelve closely written pages out of the drawer, and tore them into tiny bits into his waste basket. Then he hurried out to join his friend in the gym.

On Sunday afternoon he wrote a cheerful letter describing the Academy life to his aunts, and to his Uncle Tom he sent the following:

DEAR UNCLE TOM:

They have handed me a few since I came.

But yours truly is still in the game.

DICK.

IV

DICK SPIKES HIS HAT

A FEW days after that first unlucky cutter drill, rowing drill in the cutters was assigned to Dick's company. To his dismay, the officer in charge of this drill designated him as coxswain of one of the cutters, and handed him a copy of the "Boat Book" to call his orders from. From his careful watching of the previous drill Dick remembered that the coxswain climbed into the boat and made everything clear for letting fall.

He decided that he wouldn't advertise his greenness by asking the officer what he should do, but scrambled into his cutter, resolved to find out by trying and watching his comrades. With an occasional glance over his shoulders at his neighbors in their boats, he

DICK SPIKES HIS HAT

found it not so hard to get the tackle cleared after all, and shouted "Lower away together" only a few moments after the other coxswains. Naturally, he was a bit nervous, but he found the proper place in the boat book and, taking his cue from the other coxswains, gripped the tiller and bawled his orders manfully. He was going to make good this time!

They had not gone very far before Dick noticed water swishing round in the bottom of the boat, and he thought it very inefficient of somebody to permit a cutter to remain so leaky. He decided to report the matter to the lieutenant when the drill was over. In a few minutes he realized that the water was coming in very rapidly, and there were audible grumblings from the men on the thwarts to the same effect. The boat was filling! Here was an emergency calling for a cool head. Dick was determined to show nerve. Rising in the stern sheets and facing the officer—whose launch was only a few rods away—he saluted and piped up:

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“Sir, I report that my boat is rapidly sinking!”

Astonishment fell upon all the boats' crews within earshot and paralyzed their oars. All eyes were fixed on the gallant Pewee who stood at attention on his sinking craft like the boy upon the burning deck.

“What the——!” snorted the lieutenant under his breath, and ordered the launch alongside.

“Sir,” volunteered one of the boat's crew, “the plug's still out!” And he swashed about in the water till he found it and jammed it in.

“Coxswain, didn't you put that plug in?” roared the officer. There was a suppressed explosion of laughter on all sides.

“I—I—didn't—know—about——” stammered Dick, wilting under that fierce question.

“It's all right now, sir,” reported the midshipman who had reported the trouble.

“Coxswain, you keep your cutter out of the drill till you have baled her dry!”

DICK SPIKES HIS HAT

So poor Dick had to get down into the bottom and scoop water out for twenty back-breaking minutes, spurred on by witticisms from his crew. It was horrible!

When the drill was over, he left his classmates as soon as he could. How should he have known that there was a plug to be put into the bottom before the cutter was lowered? In reality, there had been nothing the matter with him but the fact that he was green, while his classmates were already seasoned by nearly three months of training; but he had been so laughed at that he felt as if his blunders had been so many and so terrible that he was perhaps not fit to be in the navy after all. No matter how hard he tried, he never could seem to do things right! He wanted to get away from even Zim for fear of more "running" from his classmates.

Zim had told him a day or two before that no special permission was required to visit the *Hartford*, which lay moored alongside the *Santee* wharf. Farragut was his pet hero.

“ PEWEE ” CLINTON, PLEBE

He already knew by heart the thrilling story of the New Orleans, Port Hudson and Mobile Bay fights and was anxious to tread the historic decks of Farragut's flagship. As he left the boatsheds it occurred to him that he couldn't find a better way of cheering up than by going over the *Hartford*.

On coming close to her, he was disappointed to find machine-guns at her ports instead of the old Civil War smooth-bores, but there, over the companionway on the gun deck, he found in gold letters the old Admiral's famous "Damn the torpedoes!" and Dick experienced a genuine thrill as he looked at that exclamation and thought of the desperate position of the fleet in Mobile Bay when that was uttered, and how under Farragut's orders the gallant *Hartford* led the way across the line of torpedoes and snatched victory from defeat.

On returning to the spardeck, he stood in the shadow of the mainmast and repeated softly to himself the stanzas of a poem he

DICK SPIKES HIS HAT

had found in an old volume of the "Century"
and recited at an "exhibition" of the High
School:

Gray-haired old Farragut,
Strong heart unbroke,
Daring old Farragut,
Thunderbolt stroke,
Watches the hoary mist
Lift from the bay,
Till his flag, glory-kissed,
Beckons young day.

Far, by Fort Morgan's wall,
Black looms a fleet.
Hark! deck and rampart call;
Rolls the drum beat.
Lads, buoy your anchor-chains,
While the steam hums.
Men! to the battlement,
Farragut comes.

* * *

On by heights battle-ploughed,
While the spars quiver;
Onward still flames the cloud
Where the hulks shiver.
See, yon fort's star is set,
Storm and fire past.
Cheer him, lads—Farragut,
Lashed to the mast!

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

There were two or three enlisted men who stopped to grin at the little Plebe who seemed to be talking so seriously to himself, but Dick paid no attention to them, if he even saw them. He finished the poem with a warm glow of patriotism at his heart and was about to leave the ship when a grizzled boatswain, with rows of service stripes on his sleeve stopped him at the gangway.

“Young gentleman,” he said sternly, “you’ve been here long enough to know better than to step aboard a man-of-war without saluting the flag!”

Dick flushed, opened his mouth to make an excuse, thought better of it, and clipping his heels together saluted. Then he beat a retreat.

Just then a group of Plebes were idling along near the wharf scouting for a safe outdoor place to smoke in. Among them was Zim, who was on Dick’s trail. Meanwhile “Dutchy” regaled his companions with some of his numerous stories, to the accompaniment of shouts of laughter.

DICK SPIKES HIS HAT

“Hullo, Pewee, been spiking your hat?” called one of the fellows as Dick stepped on the wharf.

“Been what?” asked the latter, pulling off his white duck hat and looking at in a puzzled way as if he expected to find something the matter with it. As this raised a laugh, he went on, “I don’t know the gag, I’ve just been looking over the *Hartford*.”

“Squeeze out a few patriotic thrills?” inquired Zim.

“Sure, why not?” answered Dick stoutly. “A Dutch beer barrel like you, I suppose, wouldn’t be able to; but my grandfather and all his brothers were in the war.” Dick didn’t like the careless way Zim had of treating sacred things.

“Help yourself,” answered Zim good-naturedly; “the old *Hartford* is like George Washington’s jack-knife that somebody had, it’s got a new handle and new blades, but it’s the same jack-knife. That tub hasn’t a splinter in her that belongs to the Civil War.”

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Dick snorted that he didn't believe it.

“If he thinks so much of the ‘dear old *Hartford*’ and hasn't spiked his hat yet, it's time he did it,” put in one of the group who was one of Wentworth's friends.

“Well, what is it?” asked Dick, rather nettled at the fellow's tone.

“Why, kid, every Plebe is supposed to pull his hat down over the spike at the top of one of the *Hartford*'s masts till he tears a hole through. That's spiking your hat. The foremast is bad luck,” he added casually. “They say that every fellow that has done the foremast has bilged.”

“Have you spiked your hat?”

“Sure, on the main. Most everybody has.”

Dick glanced up at the tip of the main-top-gallant-mast. It seemed a mile high. Zim said nothing, and the rest of the crowd looked at the Pewee in a quizzing way that was a challenge.

“If you'll lend me your sneakers,” said he

DICK SPIKES HIS HAT

to the smallest of the lot who had been playing tennis, "I'll spike it now!"

The other cheerfully contributed his tennis shoes, and Dick marched back to the *Hartford*.

"Do it in style, old man!" Zim called out to him in encouragement. Dick stepped aboard again, this time not forgetting to salute the flag in proper style. Then he started up the shrouds. He picked his way at first rather clumsily and slowly, clutching tightly to the rigging, and getting from his classmates jeering advice not to "squeeze all the tar out of the ropes." At this he stopped to wave a careless hand at them, hoping to give them the idea that he was having the time of his life.

Feeling that he must try not to appear so lubberly, he put on extra steam and scrambled up the shrouds with fairly creditable speed for a beginner. It wasn't so bad with steady ratlines to tread on and taut shrouds to cling to, but when he got to where the top-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

gallant mast was stepped he had to leave the shrouds for the “Jacob’s ladder.” This, on an old square-rigger, is a villainous rope ladder, fastened only at top and bottom, and as you begin climbing on it it develops a nasty trick of swaying back and forth like a flying ring in a gym.

Cheer him lads—Farragut,
Lashed to the mast!

The lines came back to the poor little lubber with a ludicrous significance, as he started up the Jacob’s ladder.

“Old Farragut had a cinch. I wish somebody would lash me to the mast!” Slowly but manfully Dick struggled up till, when he was about half-way up the swaying made him so dizzy that he had to shut his swimming eyes, grip hard with hands and knees and stop for a few moments. An effort of will and the rest conquered the giddy head and Dick was soon at the top of the ladder and at the foot of the topmast spar. Again he had

DICK SPIKES HIS HAT

to steady himself with the best effort he could muster for he happened to look below and the deck seemed so small and so dreadfully far down!

Now came what seemed the impossible part of the feat. Up from where he clung the spar rose about fifteen feet, without a shroud or a stay to cling to. For a minute he had to struggle hard against a sickly temptation to give up and climb down again. He thought of that old story in the Fifth Reader of the middy—the Captain's son—who climbed to the main-truck of the *Constitution* and couldn't get down till his father made him jump into the water by threatening to shoot him. Dick shuddered as he pictured to himself that fearful jump. Then he thought of those fellows down there watching him, and especially Zim.

“No, sir,” he hissed between set teeth, “I'll break every bone in my body first!”

He spit on his hands, grasped the bare spar between his knees, and began shinning

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

up. After the first few inches, when he discovered that he didn't tumble headlong at the first try, the climb wasn't so desperately hard after all. He began to feel a rather pleasant exhilaration in the excitement of doing the biggest "stunt" he had ever attempted. He did not trust himself to look down, but concentrated his attention on the strip of varnished wood between his hands and chin till at last he reached the very tip. Then, with one hand, he whipped off his hat and pulled it down over the spike till it tore through the cloth. Clapping the wounded hat back on his head, he gripped the mast tighter than ever and let himself, for the first time, look round. His eyes took in a magnificent sweep of woods, fields, the shimmering expanse of bay with the sails of the oyster boats in the distance gleaming snow white in the afternoon sun, then the Academy buildings, and directly beneath him the broad river. But as the look downwards on the river made him dizzy again, he shut his eyes

DICK SPIKES HIS HAT

and let himself slip down slowly till he reached the foothold.

With the feeling of triumph warming the cockles of his heart, Dick made light work of the down trip. Before he reached the dock again, some of the fellows had gone, among them the one who had put it up to the Pewee to spike his hat; but there were still several waiting to greet him when he stepped on the wharf triumphantly twirling his spiked hat with his finger through the hole.

“Banzai!” shouted Zim, “and then some!”

“Good Kid!” laughed the others. “Say, make Dutchy divvy!” suggested one. “You did the work.”

“I’ve just made seven dollars,” explained Zim complacently. “Several of this bunch—some are not here to welcome you—bet that you wouldn’t do it, and I took ’em.” He produced a roll with the air of a book-maker at the races. “It is also considered ‘de rigger’ for a Plebe to do a back air-spring off the fore topsail yard of the *Hartford*, land-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

ing neatly in the water without much splash. Now will any sportin' gent put up five dollars that my young frien' here can't do it?"

Just then the warning stroke of the bell warned the laughing Plebes of the nearness of supper formation, and the group scattered in the direction of Quarters. Zim chuckled quietly to himself as he strolled back with his roommate.

"Did you ever spike your hat?" asked Dick suddenly.

"Me?" laughed the other. "No such fool! What chance do you think my fat tummy would have shinning that mast? I'm great on dying for my country. I only wish I had more lives to give for my country——" Here Zim struck a pose as Nathan Hale. "But I'm darned if I break my neck for nothing. Still, it was rather up to you, old man," he added laying a chummy hand on Dick's shoulder, "and I knew you'd make good."

V

A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE

MUCH to Dick's joy, Zim found no difficulty in arranging it so that the two could be roommates. The fellow originally assigned to Zim as roommate had been sent away on indefinite sick leave shortly before Dick arrived, so that only official permission was needed to permit the latter to move in. The arrangement provided for a bed apiece in one room, with a table in common, and a locker apiece. Being a Plebe room, its windows faced the inner courtyard instead of the Yard or Chesapeake Bay, and being an Academy room, it had nothing of the attractiveness of a college boy's quarters, for the regulations do not permit a single article of adornment; but the companionship of a jolly, level-headed chap like Conried Zimmerman

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

made up for everything. He was invaluable to Dick in constantly reminding him of the hundred and one little details of the routine that the rest of the class had already learned, and after the latter's first nervousness wore off he began to catch on to the ropes rapidly.

In spite of Zim's description of the horrors of summer drills, Dick didn't find the program so dreadful after all. The September routine that he fell into consisted of two or three drill periods a day, with one recitation in French, or mechanical drawing, leaving plenty of time for tennis, swimming, or browsing among the shelves in the library.

It was now the end of September and the day before the rest of the midshipmen were due to return. Zim, who had a knack of knowing about everything sooner than anybody else, burst in that afternoon fairly bulging with news.

“Listen, there's a company rough-house on to-night!”

A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE

“A what?”

“Com-pan-y rough-house. You know what a ‘company’ is and you know there is such a thing as a ‘rough-house.’ Well, anyhow, during the summer the second company and the third—that’s us, you know,—have had two grand fights. We lost the first because the other crowd came up on our deck without any warning and out of sheer malice. It wasn’t a fight, it was a rout.”

“What did they do to you?” grinned Dick.

“To be explicit, my dear Alphonse, we were soused in the shower baths. But the second time we got wind of what was coming and we drove ’em back. They had foozled the attack anyhow, because a lot of their men didn’t know about it until it was all over and we had driven the gang down the stairs before the O. C. showed up.”

“How do you fight?” Dick was getting excited at the idea.

“Water—slop jars and pitchers, plus

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

brooms. The fellow that's taken prisoner and ducked in the shower is, by the rules of the gentle sport, 'dead.' ”

“It's rumored on the QT,” added Zim, “that our friends on the lower deck are coming to wipe us up to-night. It's the last chance for a Plebe rough-house because the upper classmen arrive to-morrow. Our fellows had been talking of a raid on general principles, but we're bound to be on the defensive because there are more of them and some of them the biggest fellows in the class. There'll be a run on the store for crockery to-morrow!” And Zim's eyes twinkled at the thought of the coming battle.

Dick, who had never seen a real rough-house in his life, was so much excited that he couldn't put his mind on the French verbs of that day's lesson to save his life. At the first opportunity he examined the walls of the corridor and the approach by the big central stairway. He brought back an idea which

A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE

he and Zim talked over for a long while. It was a bit irregular, Zim thought, and he was a great stickler for naval tradition, but he finally declared himself game for it in a pinch. How Dick wished he had the inches and muscles of a fellow like Wentworth! Well, anyway, he could show 'em he wasn't a mollycoddle; he'd help somehow. And with this thought he finally dropped asleep.

The third-deckers had posted a sentry after taps and inspection, to give warning of the approach of the enemy. These pickets stood watch an hour at a time till midnight, when at the last stroke of the eight bells the sentry who was just on the point of going to call his relief, heard the sounds of opening doors and pattering feet on the floor below. Instantly he darted down his corridor, thumping on the doors like a Paul Revere in pajamas. The doors opened in a twinkling, emptying the room of trowsled figures, each with a pitcher or slop jar in one hand and a

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

broom in the other. And they were none too soon in turning out. Just as Dick, blinking in a daze, reached the part of the corridor near the stairs, he saw the two companies already joined in battle. The second-deckers, who had been well organized, led by Wentworth and the heavier men, were crowding steadily up the stairs, ducking the group of third-deckers, who, though disorganized, stood manfully at the head of the stairs like Horatio at the bridge. As soon as water gave out, both sides took to whacking each other with brooms like Turk and Christian.

At first the third company had an advantage in their position. It is easier to throw water down than up. The others who found that they were unable to take the third-deckers by surprise, postponed the water process, after the first few minutes of the attack, until they had got possession of the deck and could capture their enemy one by one and douse them in their own shower

A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE

baths. No amount of water from the third deck could keep the attacking party back, and they advanced steadily, though every inch was fiercely contested.

Dick, being the smallest man on the deck, soon tossed away his useless broom and, with two or three others, ran back and forth filling empty jars and pitchers for those in the front ranks. The air was alive with brooms, streams of water, and an occasional jar or pitcher which sailed down with its contents and smashed against the wall. Finally, Wentworth and his huskies threw away their brooms, and paying no attention to water or broom, closed with the leaders of the third-deckers and fought to disarm them and make them prisoners. Their clothes were torn to ribbons but this form of attack was irresistible. One by one the third-deck warriors of the front ranks had their brooms wrenched out of their hands, were grabbed and hustled down the stairs to the rear men, who carried

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

them off to the shower baths with loud jeers. According to the rules of the game, this put them out of the fight.

The third company rallied desperately, but the forward pressure of the attacking column was too much and they began to give way.

“Now’s the time!” cried Zim, who had been at Dick’s elbow during most of the fight. After the final inspection by the officer in charge, the two had taken down the fire hose that hung coiled on the wall, stretched it clear and tested the valve. Now they turned on the water. The heavy canvas hose swelled and curved like a giant python as the two jumped for the nozzle. The last defenders, not captured by the enemy, broke and fled, and on stormed Wentworth at the head of his troops.

“There’s that blanked little squirt!”—he began, catching a glimpse of Dick’s face in the dim light of the corridor. But he got no further.

“Speaking of squirts——” chirped Dick,



**"SPEAKING OF SQUIRTS," CHIRPED DICK, AS HE AIMED THE TORRENT
SQUARELY INTO WENTWORTH'S SOLAR PLEXUS**

A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE

grinning at his little joke, and, as the pressure reached the nozzle, he aimed the torrent squarely into Wentworth's solar plexus.

As many remarked the next day, it was as clean a knockout as a fellow could ask to see. Wentworth forgot everything and just curled up with his mouth open and gasping like a fish on the beach. The next man caught it on the jaw and fell over backwards. The other third-deckers instantly rallied to their new engine of defence, and sprang once more to the fray. They dragged Wentworth with unholy joy to the nearest shower bath and soaked him into feeble consciousness. The rest of the second-deckers, unable to face that torrent scrambled ingloriously down the stairs. Just then a warning cry came from one of the prisoners on the deck below.

“Beat it, the O. C.!”

O. C. is Academy slang for the Officer-in-Charge, who had finally in his distant room awakened to the noise, and after hurrying on enough clothes to support his dignity had

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

made with all haste to the battlefield. At that warning cry friend and foe at once fled to their rooms, leaving the decks and stairs streaming with water and littered with broken brooms and crockery. But the victory had been won. A half dozen of the third-deckers hurriedly turned to stow the hose before the O. C. should make his appearance; and, as that official stopped on the deck below to have the second company mustered for inspection, they succeeded in getting it ship-shape and themselves out of sight before he arrived on the third deck.

The two companies had to stand at attention on their respective floors for fifteen dripping, shivering minutes. It was a wonderful spectacle of very pink young gentlemen, soaked to the skin, with their pajamas mostly in tatters, and some adorned only with a hastily-snatched towel. All hands were informed that they were reported for “making a disturbance after taps” with a minimum of ten demerits, but what’s a matter

A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE

of ten demerits in the light of victory! The third-deckers almost grinned in the face of the angry officer. And Pewee Clinton suddenly found himself the hero of the hour.

“You made yourself solid with the boys to-night, all right,” chuckled Zim, slapping his roommate on the back. “I told ’em that fire hose business was your idea. Ha—ha! Didn’t old Went look like a cat throwing a fit?” And for several minutes Zim continued to chortle to himself under the bed-clothes.

For Dick, the thought that at last he had made good before his classmates, after all his greenness and blunders, was so sweet that it was long before he could get to sleep for excitement and joy. And when he did drop off, it seemed only about thirty seconds before reveille sounded.

The new day, September 30, brought back the rest of the midshipmen for the beginning of the new year. All day they streamed through the corridors, togged out in their

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

loudest “cits,” which they had that day to exchange for the quiet dark blue of the service uniform. As they passed the Plebes they made careless remarks about them in a loud tone. Of course Dick came in for a lion’s share of ridicule, but he was learning to take it now without letting it hurt him.

There was something rankling in his mind, however, and that was the way he had just been treated by Bullen, a first classman who had been appointed to teach him the manual of arms. Bullen’s manner had been disagreeable from the first, but this morning his language had been unbearable. The familiar, hot rankling feeling, burned again, and, after the triumph of the night before, that mean sensation was the last thing that Dick had expected to have. In spite of what Dick felt was a reasonable proficiency in the drill manual, Bullen had steadily reported him “not qualified” to the drill lieutenant, as if the fellow took a malicious pleasure in having the little Plebe under his thumb.

A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE

It was recreation hour and he and Zim talked it over as they walked over to the athletic field to watch the first line-up of the regular football squad.

“I tell you, Zim, it makes me ashamed that I stood such language from him! And I’ve never done a thing to deserve it. I’ve caught on to the manual well enough now to drill with the rest of the class, and I’ve been perfectly respectful, too. He has always been disagreeable, and now he’s rank dirty—insulting!” Dick’s face got red and he fairly exploded at the last word.

Zim looked thoughtful and let his roommate pour out all his wrath without a word in reply.

“Well, what’s the dope?” concluded Dick, turning to his chum for advice.

“Come on over to this empty bench, and I’ll tell you. This fellow Bullen is a bad egg. I heard some of the upper classmen call him the ‘Bilger,’ because he has dropped back twice on account of deficiencies in his

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

studies and more than once has been fired and reinstated. They say that he's been here five years already; and only last spring, while I was a candidate out in town, I heard about his being fired for something very serious and then having his punishment commuted to loss of summer leave. That's why he has been around here all summer. Senator Doby appointed him, and you know what that means for pull. Bullen bragged to me once that the Superintendent *couldn't* fire him."

"How did he happen to take *you* into his confidence?" interrupted Dick.

"Well, I knew Bullen because he used to be very chummy with Wentworth last year when we were candidates. He used to tell me that he'd 'spoon' on me when I got into the Academy because I was Went's friend. For awhile after I entered he was mighty smooth with me. He talked a lot about how fine it was to be a sport, and used to take me off to an empty room to teach me poker. I

A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE

played because my uncle told me to do what I was told by upper classmen, but after Bullen had cleaned me out of fifty dollars, I decided I'd had enough. The lessons came too high, and I told him so. He hasn't had any use for me since, and to-day he cut me dead."

"He's still pretty thick with Wentworth, isn't he?"

"Yes, that's the thing I'm coming to. Went isn't very bright and he's simply getting buncoed without catching on to it. I believe that the trouble with you and me is that we knocked the wind out of him last night and got him laughed at by the whole class for the figure he cut in front of that hose. Now Bullen is taking it out of you while he has the chance in order to keep himself solid with Wentworth, and he'll take a whack at me if he gets an opening."

"Well, I tell you right now, if he gives me any more of that kind of lip, I'm going to

A COMPANY ROUGH-HOUSE

answer back good and plenty!" growled Dick, still nursing his anger.

"If you do, you'll get into a peck of trouble," warned his friend, "as I've told you before, a Plebe's business is to do as he is told and keep his mouth shut."

VI

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

WITH the beginning of the next week started the regular routine of the Academy year. In addition to the French and mechanical drawing there were now recitations in Mathematics and English, with a drill almost every afternoon. Monday afternoon, much to Dick's disgust, he was ordered to report again to Bullen for special instruction in the manual of arms. Dick took a rifle from the rack in the Armory at the appointed time and stood at attention before his tormentor. Out of the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse of Wentworth, who, being excused from drill on account of a cut foot received on the night of the water-fight, was lolling in the gallery before going to watch the foot-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

ball practice, from which also he had been temporarily excused.

“Here, you snivelling, little, sissified skunk,” began Bullen with a wink in Wentworth’s direction, “get busy. Don’t glare at me like a poisoned rat!”

Somehow Dick could feel that Wentworth was grinning, though he couldn’t see him, and he trembled with rage. Bullen looked around to see that nobody else was within earshot and then he let drive at Dick a volley of filthy abuse that can be represented in type only by a row of stars.

“Shut up, you mucker!”

Bullen would not have been more surprised if the roof of the armory had fallen in, and he actually did shut up for a whole second. “And I’m not going to stand for any more of your mouth if I have to resign for it!” Dick, hardly realizing himself what he was doing, turned on his heel, returned his rifle to the rack, and marched rapidly out of the building, paying no heed to the angry orders

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

Bullen shouted after him. The latter dashed after him, finally, with clenched fists and awful threats, but Dick beat him to the door and marched straight up the walk to quarters without turning his head to look back.

Bullen followed in a towering rage and, as soon as he could, forwarded to the Commandant's office a report against Midshipman Clinton of "gross insubordination, disobedience of orders, and gross disrespect to a superior officer." Any one of these offences was almost enough in itself to send a guilty midshipman flying out of the gates in his citizen's clothes. Zim was frankly alarmed when he heard the story, and Dick, as he thought over the prospect of being dismissed in disgrace, began to feel a sinking feeling under his ribs.

That night he was put under arrest; that is, he was forbidden to leave his room, and ate a melancholy supper by himself. Zim, though worried, did his best to cheer him up.

"Remember, old chap, the Bilger has a

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

rotten reputation, and you can bet your last dollar that the Old Man (the Commandant) doesn't love him any too well. He's a square old whisker, too. Don't worry, old chap!"

But the lad couldn't help worrying over the thought of being dismissed just as the term's work was beginning. What would the folks say in Skowhegan? How could he face his old High School friends again? He tossed back and forth on his bed long after taps. Finally a comforting thought came to him:

"By George, if Uncle Tom knows all about it, I know he'll stand by me anyway!"

In due time, namely after the first morning recitation, Dick received his summons to appear at the Commandant's office. It had been awe-inspiring to face the Superintendent on the first day, but to stand before the Commandant, that dispenser of demerits, that martinet before whom even first classmen are afraid, and with the knowledge that you stood guilty of an awful offense in the laws of a military school,—well, no wonder

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

Dick's heart beat in his throat and his stomach felt as if he were shooting down in an elevator.

"You understand that you are reported for a very serious offense, Mr. Clinton?" The Commandant bent his eyes on Dick, as if he expected to read his answer on the lad's face. "I ordered your division officer to send you direct to me, because I prefer to hear whatever statement you have to make from your own lips."

Dick drew a long breath, squared his shoulders, and looked the officer directly in the eye. "Sir," he began, "I've tried my best to learn the drill, and to show proper respect, too. But I couldn't stand nasty epithets, sir."

"Disobedience and insubordination are not to be excused by the use of rough words from a superior officer, young man."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Twenty-five demerits," concluded the Commandant after a pause. "And you are

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

ordered to join your company in all drills from and including to-day. You may go.”

Dick turned on his heel and walked out. Once outside, he drew a deep breath of relief that was almost a sob. What of twenty-five demerits! That put him on third conduct grade, of course, but it wasn't dismissal! And he had to restrain a strong desire to whoop. Zim was waiting for him with anxiety written all over his pink face, and when he heard the news he hugged his roommate and they performed a wild dance of joy.

While this was going on, another scene, in some respects a duplicate of the first interview with the Commandant, was taking place. Bullen had been surprised by orders to report to the Commandant's office. He came and stood before the official desk with the assured air of one who had been there many times, and scored several notable victories. The Commandant looked at Bullen, but not with the eye of inquiry that he had levelled on Clinton, and which the latter told Zim

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

“seemed to see my spine from the front.” The Commandant already knew the Bilger very well, and did not love him, either. That very morning’s paper had brought word of Senator Doby’s defeat in the primaries for re-election to the Senate. The “Progressives” in his state had organized a successful campaign against one of the “Old Guard” who for fifteen years had been almost a dictator in the naval committee. So sure had he been in causing the reversal of the sentence of dismissal against Bullen by the Secretary of the Navy that he had written a personal note to the Commandant regarding Bullen’s case that amounted to an insult.

The Commandant now smiled grimly as he twisted the ends of his grizzled moustache. “Mr. Bullen, you have been guilty of using abusive and indecent language to a subordinate without provocation. You are too old an offender to get off easy. Forty demerits. You may go.”

Bullen went out boiling with fury and long-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

ing for revenge. A few days afterwards the longed-for opportunity came. He and one of his under-class satellites, Riordan, were in the gym at the same time Dick was there practising on the tumbling mat. He had just landed after a successful air-spring when he heard his name called in the unpleasant voice of his foe. At his elbow was Riordan, grinning disagreeably.

“Here are boxing gloves,” said Bullen; “you have a chance to learn something from Mr. Riordan. Oh, you’re afraid you’ll get hurt, are you?” he sneered as Dick hesitated.

The latter instantly seized the gloves thrust toward him and put them on without a word. He saw the put-up game. Fighting is forbidden under very severe penalties, but there’s nothing to prevent a friendly set-to in the gymnasium with gloves. Riordan was two inches taller than Dick and heavier. Suddenly, with a sickening regret, Dick remembered that last summer, when Uncle Tom had offered to pay for a course of boxing les-

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

sons for him he had been too lazy to take advantage of the offer. He knew nothing whatever about the use of his fists and had no doubt at all as to the outcome of the approaching encounter. Only he resolved with his teeth set that he would keep on coming up as long as he could see.

“Here’s your classmate, Wentworth,” suggested Bullen maliciously, as the latter strolled in, “he’ll be glad to act as second for you, I’m sure.”

“I don’t want him,” answered Dick curtly. “Come on, you!” Wentworth laughed derisively and stood by to watch the conflict. Riordan certainly did “come on.” He proved to be a regular little Irish whirlwind with the gloves. Bat, swat, bing! In a minute Dick’s nose was running a red stream, in another his lip was cut and an eye was damaged. Next, a thud on the end of the breast-bone, followed by a jab on the point of the jaw, sent him, a breathless heap, to the mat. The two onlookers jeered and laughed.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Just then another figure strolled over to the group. It was “Rhino” Douglas, a first classman and “four-striper” in the brigade organization, also captain of the gym team. Dick staggered groggily to his feet and put up his “dukes” for the sake of sticking it out as long as he could, when another full swing on the sore nose bowled him over again.

“I reckon that’s about enough,” drawled Douglas, with a southern accent. “This isn’t boxing. Go back to the wash-room and hurry back here again,” he ordered Dick. “Now you, Bullen, peel off and let’s have another little bout—if you’re not a coward,” he added, as the Bilger tried to bluff him off with an “aw gowan, it’s too hot.”

There was no love lost between the two evidently, for at the word coward Bullen flung off his coat and shirt with an oath, snatched Riordan’s gloves and began pulling them on. Riordan stood by with all the Irishman’s passion to see or be in a fight, and by

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

the time Dick came running back with some of his red badge of courage removed, the two first classmen were circling about each other for an opening.

Bullen was a strongly built fellow, with reach and weight clearly superior to Douglas. The latter, however, was slightly taller and decidedly quicker. It was a battle royal. Slowly Bullen dropped from attack to defense, as one round after another was called off by Riordan who held the watch. Of course, boxing gloves are softer than bare knuckles, but when blows that mean business rain on eye, nose, and lip, round after round, it gets monotonous for the victim, to say the least. Moreover, if one has not been in training for a long while one's wind gets blown. Nothing, however, seemed to tire Douglas. His blows were speedier at the fifth round than at the first. It was the first exhibition of scientific boxing Dick had ever seen, and though he could appreciate only a small part of what he saw, his mouth was

“PEWEE ” CLINTON, PLEBE

open with wonder and admiration. At the seventh round Bullen seemed to be getting very tired; he tried merely to cover. Douglas followed him up with an attack so hard and rapid that twice his opponent went to the mat. At the end of the eighth he took the count.

“Get enough?” asked Douglas. Bullen reluctantly grunted an affirmative, wiping away the blood that streamed from his nose and lip. “All right. Next time don’t put up a job on a small Plebe while I’m around.”

Bullen and his two retainers made off to the dressing rooms, the former making various elaborate excuses for his defeat to the latter. Douglas put out his hand to Dick.

“I’m ‘spooning’ on you, as they say here. What’s your name and where are you from?” Dick told him. “Well, I’m from Tennessee. Your grandfather and mine probably shot at each other fifty years ago. Now I want to tell you that no fellow has a right to grow up without learning to use his fists. Your

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

attempt would have disgraced a girl. I noticed you starting gym work. That's all right, but you must learn to box."

"Would you be willing to give me a few lessons?" asked Dick humbly.

"Sure. Now for the pool. Do you swim?"

Dick then thanked his Uncle Tom from the bottom of his heart that he was able to say yes confidently. In a few minutes the two were taking long dives into the cool green depths of the pool.

"What you want to remember about that little set-to," said Douglas while they were dressing, "is that it was nothing but a case of training against no training. Bullen boxes fully as well as I do, but I kept him going fast till he was so winded that he wobbled on his feet. He is a good second baseman, too, but, like a lot of these athletes, when he's through with the season's training he lets himself get soft and fat and short-winded. Look at them after they graduate. There's Putnam, one of the football coaches. He was

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

a star tackle when I was a Plebe. Now he's so fat that he puffs when he stoops to pick up a ball. The thing is to keep in condition all the time, young man, and that's worth more than making a team or breaking a record. When athletics get sane one of these days, we'll have exercise for the body's sake, instead of bodies sacrificed for the sake of the exercise. In the long run, the crew, track and football do more to injure than to benefit. I've got a lot of medicine men with me in that opinion, too, and I'm telling you this because you're too small to go into any of those things and I want to give you this comfort for yourself, that you can make yourself more fit and develop yourself better by sensible work in the gym and sensible games outdoors than by being the athletic hero of the Academy. And you begin with the boxing gloves."

Dick listened respectfully as became a Plebe, though such heresy against football and athletics in general made him wonder

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

if his new friend were not a bit "queer." Douglas lingered behind to look over a new horizontal bar that had just been installed, and as Dick left the gym alone, he saw Wentworth strolling back and forth, apparently waiting for some one. Dick left him plenty of room by crossing to the other side of the road, but the other followed and stopped him.

"See here, Pewee!"

"Well?"

"I want to tell you that you might as well resign, because you won't last long any way. You have queered yourself by whining to the Commandant about what Bullen said to you at drill. Tattling doesn't go in this place, and Bullen will never forget it. He'll keep you always on the report for something, and my friends are as anxious as I am to get a little shrimp like you out of the class and the Academy. You'll save trouble for yourself by resigning now."

"If you call what I did whining and tattling, Bullen did it first," retorted Dick. But

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Wentworth disdained to be dragged into an argument and walked rapidly away.

“Oh,” groaned Dick, clenching his fists, “why wasn’t I made big enough to—to—hand him a few? So he and Bullen think they can run me out of the Academy, do they? I’ll show ’em!” And he thought with confidence of the new friend he had in the four-striper, the cadet officer who ranks second in the brigade formation, who had not only “spooned” on him but so gallantly avenged him that very afternoon.

Zim listened with great interest to his friend’s recital of the afternoon’s adventures.

“Gee, but you’re always in hot water!” he laughed. “Nobody bothers about me. Every one says ‘hullo Dutch,’ and I’m at peace with the world. Even Wentworth, who hates me because I’m chumming with you, has got to be pleasant because he owes me twenty-five dollars and is afraid I might try to collect. But you are the original Pickle!”

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

Then he frowned. "I tell you we'll have to get busy to fight that combination of Bullen and Wentworth, because they can make it mighty uncomfortable. There's nothing like the persecution an upper classman can hand out to a Plebe, and Went has a big following in the class, too. But Bullen's reputation isn't any perfume in the nose of the Discipline Department, that's one comfort."

"Well, what about my ratey friend Douglas?"

"He must be O K at bottom, but he has the reputation of being the most unpopular man in the Academy. His class put him in Coventry third-class year, for reporting one of his classmates who wouldn't take orders from him in section formation. It's an unwritten law here, you know, never to report a classmate, and that settled him."

"What's Coventry?"

"That's what they call it when nobody speaks to you, except officially, not even your roommate. The class treats you like a leper,

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

and the best thing a victim can do is to resign. Douglas didn't resign, but I guess he never got over it even though at the end of the year the class took it back and told him they were sorry. I heard a lot about him last year at the boarding house, and he must have bats in his belfry. He won't go to football practice to cheer the team, he won't bet on any of the Army games, and—well, he's what they call him, a 'Rhino,' a fellow that's always growling. Only Douglas knocks *things* instead of people, and usually your pet ideas. That's why he's unpopular and a sort of hermit. Yet they say he's the finest gym man the Academy ever had, and he's been on the fencing team for three years. But he hasn't a real chum in the place, so you won't find him a fellow to pull wires for you!" And Zim laughed at the expression on his roommate's face.

"By George, I'm sorry for him then!" cried Dick, warmly. "He thinks I'm only a kid, but I wish I could be a friend to him.

AN ENEMY AND A FRIEND

He sure did stand by me this afternoon in a way that I won't forget in a hurry!"

"Remember that some time when he steps on your favorite corn!" chuckled Zim. "He'll do it as a religious duty."

"Never you mind, don't you wish he had spooned on you!" retorted Dick, and then he referred again to his unpleasant interview with Wentworth.

"That means," said Zim, "that the Bilger got it in the neck from the Commandant about his line of talk to you, and he's made it out to Went that you tattled to the old boy. And of course he'll say that to his gang to give you a black eye."

"I seem to be sure of a black eye no matter what happens," said Dick dolefully, looking at his discolored eye in the glass. "You'd better get another roommate, Zim, you might catch one from me."

VII

ON THE BUOY

Not long after Wentworth's disagreeable advice as to Dick's resigning, the latter received a mysterious note from the hands of a "moke," as the darkies are called who attend to cleaning the corridors. Dick read it aloud to Zim:

RICHARD C. CLINTON, 4th Class:

Report this evening, immediately after release call, at the east gunshed on the waterfront.

"Here's a crazy signature," said Dick, knitting his brows, "Somebody 'Lieutenant, U. S. N., for the Commandant of Midshipmen.' "

"The signature isn't the only crazy thing about that letter," observed Zim, after he also had failed to make a name out of the

ON THE BUOY

scrawl. "It's a mighty queer thing to ask you to do. It may be somebody's idea of a joke; but when it's signed 'Lieutenant, U. S. N., for the Commandant,' a fellow would be leary of turning it down, especially a Plebe."

"Well," ruminated Dick, twisting the paper thoughtfully round his fingers, "I guess I can stand running into a practical joke better than finding myself disobeying orders. I have to be walking on eggs any way round here to keep from busting a regulation or insulting somebody."

Dick revolved that strange order in his mind time and again that afternoon without getting any satisfactory solution. The "moke" had said distinctly, "From de Com'dant's office, sah," when Dick asked who gave it to him. And yet——

"Well, I'll go, all right," he laughed to his roommate, when the time arrived.

"Better not wear your best blouse," advised Zim, "if 'tis an adventurous tryst I see

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

thee keeping. Ah-h, don't gug-go!” he suddenly dropped into melodrama, clinging tragically to Dick's ears, “yuh are me only che-ild, the mainstay of meh declining ye-ahs,” he sobbed. “I kennot let yuh go fr-rom meh. If yuh are sl-lain, I might have to—to—*work!*”

“Cheese it, let go!” laughed the other. “I'll be late.” These little dramatic scenes on the part of Zim happened several times a day, but never too often to amuse his roommate, for a first-rate comedian was lost when the boy from St. Louis entered the navy.

Dick hurried out and down the broad steps of the terrace and cut across the parade ground toward the gunshed that stood near the corner of the sea-wall where Severn River became Chesapeake Bay. There was no moon, and the sky was heavy with the promise of a northeasterly rain. Having arrived at the shed, he peered vainly about in the darkness to find anyone who should meet

ON THE BUOY

him. However, feeling that it was his duty to wait a few minutes anyway, he paced back and forth. Along the sea-wall itself were several steam launches that had been hauled up for repairs.

"Bum joke," he muttered, "I'm going back to quarters."

"Not yet, Pewee," said a disguised voice, so close to his elbow that he jumped, and a large figure with a middy's black silk scarf tied across his face, stepped out of the shadows and seized Dick by his arms. This mysterious brigand was followed by two more, similarly disguised. The little Plebe knew that it was useless to resist, and stepped cheerfully along between two of them. Behind one of the launches they came to a little skiff that was bumping her nose gently against the sea-wall, and, following directions, he climbed in and sat on the bottom.

"I'm being hazed sure enough!" he re-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

flected, “but these fellows are more likely than I to get into trouble for it. I guess I can stand it.”

Two of the kidnappers pulled at the oars, while the third steered with a broken oar over the stern. Without a word they rowed out till they had doubled the stern of the *Hartford* and then they turned up river.

“Who are these fellows?” wondered the prisoner. “Wentworth isn’t in the bunch, I can see that. It would be too rotten if they let one Plebe haze another. But I’ll bet the captain of this gang is Bullen.”

He scrutinized all that he could see of the man in question, but it was too dark to make out anything distinctive.

“If it is Bullen,” reflected Dick, “he’ll do me dirt, I know that,” and for the first time his feeling of pleasurable excitement over an adventure gave way to something like dread.

On went the little party in midstream between the black sides of the *Hartford* and the

ON THE BUOY

ghostly white hull of the *Olympia* and on up river.

“Where on earth and what on earth!” wondered Dick. But in a few minutes the helmsman swung the bow directly towards a huge red can-buoy used for mooring men-of-war. The bow oarsman caught the edge of the buoy and hauled the skiff alongside.

“Get out!” growled the fellow facing the Plebe, at the same time giving him an unpleasant little kick in the ribs to stir him out.

“It’s the Bilger all right, that’s his figure and that’s his style,” thought Dick as he climbed out on the floating perch. “He’s going to get square with me!”

The boat drifted off a few yards while the three conspirators held a whispered consultation. Evidently Bullen was proposing something which the others would not agree to. But the little Plebe on the buoy was unable to make out a word. The fellow whom he had guessed to be Bullen finally swore at his companions in great disgust and, with a

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

few strokes of the oar, pulled back to the buoy.

“I’m goin’ to paddle him good, anyway,” he said loud enough for Dick to hear. “Now you,” he ordered, “get on your knees and hold on to the ring!” And he brandished the broken oar.

“Take a feller your size!” grumbled the man in the stern who evidently didn’t relish the spectacle of an athletic fellow of twenty-three banging a small youngster of sixteen, no matter how obnoxious that youngster might be.

“Shut up!” was the curt reply, and Bullen rose in the skiff to a kneeling position on the thwart, while the bow man steadied the boat by holding on to the edge of the buoy. Dick was half-sick with helpless rage, but he had to kneel as directed. However, he kept his head turned over his shoulder with an eye on his tormentor and measured the distance.

“He’ll have to eat off the locker for a week after I get through with him,” chuckled

ON THE BUOY

the Bilger as he raised the oar for a resounding whack. "And after this, Pewee, you'd better leave the Academy, or you'll get worse!"

Just as Bullen leaned forward to bring down the blow, Dick, grasping the ring of the buoy with both hands and crouching on his knees, suddenly flung himself backwards, at the same time shooting out his right leg like a catapult. It was a lucky shot. The nail-studded heel of his regulation shoe caught the Bilger on the chin with a crack like the sound of breaking wood. If he had been an inch nearer, probably the blow would have fractured his jaw. As it was, he sailed backwards over the side of the skiff and went sousing into the river. The skiff shipped a dangerous amount of water over the gunwales and would have capsized but for the grip of the bow oarsman who clung desperately to the buoy.

Dick instantly sprang to his feet.

"Off you go!" he cried, slamming the same

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

heel on the clinging fingers. With a yell of rage and pain the fellow let go, and Dick kicked the boat out and away. He then rescued the broken oar before it floated beyond reach and stood ready to repel boarders.

“Come on, you!” he jeered. “All three at once, too!” And he waved his weapon defiantly. “You’d better fish Bullen aboard before he drowns!” he added, just to let them know that he had recognized their ringleader.

The two left in the boat had their hands too full to pay any attention to Dick’s jeering remarks. Their skiff was half full of water, and Bullen had come to the surface still unconscious from the “hook to the jaw.” Anyone who has ever tried to haul on board a boat a heavy and helpless man can imagine how the two fellows struggled with Bullen. Finally one of them held on to the unconscious man’s collar to keep his nose above water, while the others baled for dear life. They took turns at this till the bulk of the

ON THE BUOY

water was out, then, with the greatest difficulty, they dragged the Bilger aboard.

By this time the boat had drifted out with the ebbing tide, and when they looked back at Dick, standing on his buoy like a miniature Colossus of Rhodes, and jeering at them, they hadn't anything to say. They had had quite enough of the affair. Dick was quite able to repel any attack they could make and they knew it; and though they would have liked to keel-haul the impudent little Plebe, they contented themselves with rowing back in silence to the gunshed.

The few pattering raindrops that had fallen from time to time during the last half hour gave way now to a steady rain, and the wind was rising. Dick looked about him and reflected on his lot. He felt that he had come off pretty well in this hazing affair, but from now on it wasn't going to be any fun at all. To spend an October night out on a buoy in midstream, in a pouring rain and with a

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

northeast wind cutting through his wet clothes, was a long way from being a joke!

He stamped up and down to start his circulation, and as he did so a wave broke clean across the buoy, sousing him half-way to the knees. Br-rr! That felt cold! Dick looked about him for some way out. There were the lights of Bancroft Hall directly ahead. “Ta-ra-ra-ra!” the bugler began the familiar call that means “all in and lights out.”

“Taps busting,” said Dick to himself, “I’ll catch it anyway now, and those fellows will too, unless they manage to sneak in by a terrace window.” Another wave broke over his feet. “But if I hang on here all night so as to be discovered in the morning and not get papped for demerits, the chances are that some gyrene* will have to blow taps over my little grave.” He shivered as a drop of rain-water rolled icily down his back.

But there was no help in sight. The

*Marine.

ON THE BUOY

Olympia lay nearest of the group of vessels in the river, but she was still too far away to hail against that wind. Still farther away lay a torpedo-boat destroyer in a shoreward direction and to leeward, but there was no chance of attracting anybody's attention on her decks a night like this even if Dick's voice could have carried to such a distance.

"It's a case of swim for it."

Dick took off his shoes and after a brief debate with himself as to whether it was worth while to try to carry them, he decided to let them stay behind, and made the laces fast to the ring of the buoy. His Yankee thrift rebelled at the idea of wasting a new pair of shoes. Then, with a deep breath he slipped overboard and struck out for the nearest corner of the sea-wall. This was a place where the present wall had been built on the foundations of another that had gone to pieces, and he knew that he could find a good foothold for climbing out.

The first shock was not so cold as he had

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

expected, for the water was warmer than the air, and after a few vigorous strokes he didn't mind the temperature at all. Uncle Tom had taught him to swim before he was eight years old, and it was the one form of athletic sport he could do well. But it was no small stretch from the buoy to the wall, and, with his water-logged clothes, Dick was glad enough when his feet touched the rough stone slabs that gave him his first foothold.

Then, after climbing upon the wall, he began running for Quarters. A watchful “jimmy-legs”* overhauled him.

“I know I'm late,” explained Dick. “I dropped overboard and I'm running to keep warm.” He gave his name to the watchman and kept on.

Naturally he was reported on his arrival at Quarters. And to his simple statement that he had dropped overboard, the division officer added mentally the note that Midshipman Clinton had come in without his shoes.

* Watchman.

ON THE BUOY

Moreover, when those very articles were discovered on the buoy next morning by the coxswain of a boat from the *Olympia*, it was pretty clear what had happened to the Pewee, and the Department of Discipline began to reflect on the case.

Meanwhile the two fellows, who had succeeded in smuggling the Bilger into his room by means of the retreat previously arranged through a first classman's window that opened on the terrace, began to be afraid of what might happen to that dashed little Plebe out on the buoy. This hazing scheme was the Bilger's business, not theirs, but if anything happened to the Pewee——!

Much as they hated to do it, they turned back and rowed all the way to the buoy, for they knew that with such a wind and sea no one could be expected to stick on that buoy all night. When they came near enough to see that the buoy was deserted, they turned back and rowed for quarters as if they heard bloodhounds on their trail. Two terrified fig-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

ures crawled over a plank into the window where they had brought the Bilger a half hour before and slunk to their rooms. There was no sleep for them that night and no relief of mind till they saw the little Plebe himself next morning in his usual place at formation.

Dick realized very soon that the companions of the night before had evidently got back into Quarters unreported, and that no one would be any the wiser for the affair if all hands kept quiet. Accordingly he didn't breathe a word of it except to his “wife,” who was delighted at the account Dick had given of himself.

“I'm satisfied,” he laughed to Zim, “I didn't get so much as a cold in the head from that swim. And Bullen, I hear, is in the hospital with a swollen jaw. He said something about my eating off the locker for a week; I guess he'll take his meals through a glass tube for one while!”

“Son,” reproved Zim solemnly, “I don't like your braggadocio and unchristian spirit

ON THE BUOY

of revenge. Furthermore, I have heard whispers about a court of inquiry about something."

Dick's cocky air suddenly vanished, for his heart sank at the idea of being hauled up before an inquisition, especially because he knew that if they wrung an admission out of him that he had recognized Bullen, the fellows would make small distinction between that and a deliberate tattle. He was already somewhat under the ban in the eyes of many of his classmates for "tattling to the Commandant about Bullen," and he was mortally afraid of getting in still deeper.

Most hazing episodes get into the papers because somebody "talks." The rumor spreads to the type-setting machines in a jiffy, appearing later in a form so distorted as to be hardly recognizable, but highly diverting, nevertheless. Then all the papers in the land copy the story with frills of their own, till Congressmen who want to get noticed spread themselves in interviews and

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

speeches on the “intolerable conditions in the Naval Academy.” But Zim was close-mouthed, and no one outside of these immediately concerned and the officers of the Discipline Department was “on.”

When the nervous little Plebe was finally brought before the court of inquiry, he was lucky in facing three straightforward officers instead of a lawyer skilled in the art of worming the truth out of an unwilling witness. Dick stuck to his story that the three hazers wore black scarfs tied over their faces, and that they always addressed him in a disguised voice. He carefully refrained from any allusion to his treatment of Bullen’s face.

To his intense relief, he was allowed to go without having betrayed anything. Both he and Zim were called on to identify the “moke” who had brought Dick the letter ordering him to the gunshed, but that gentleman of color suddenly left town. The Commandant had suspected Bullen’s being the ringleader, on account of the affair of a short

ON THE BUOY

time before, but Bullen swore to the court that he had been in his room all the evening, and in fact had hurt his jaw by slipping and striking the table exactly on the stroke of three bells (9.30). As he got his roommate to swear to the same statement, the court accepted the alibi. Anyhow, how could he have hurt his jaw like that while hazing a little Plebe? Impossible!

So the affair blew over and, thanks to Dick, Bullen was saved from dismissal. The one benefit that the Plebe got out of the inquiry was that, as it was clearly proved that he had been hazed, the demerits he had received for coming into Quarters late were struck off.

When the Bilger appeared again, after five days in the hospital, Dick took a malicious delight in standing near him, as he passed, for the sake of grinning in his bruised face. Bullen nearly burst with fury at the impertinence, but he passed on without a word.

After a week or two, when Zim calculated that it would be safe to do so, he spread the

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

tale of the adventure on the buoy to a few of his friends. Among a large number of his classmates the Pewee's stock rose several points in consequence, but among others, who basked in the patronage of the “Real Sport,” as Bullen liked to be called, the affair worked the opposite way. The Bilger disseminated his lies as cleverly as a spiteful dressmaker, and he could have convinced his following of sporty Plebes that white was black or that the sun rose in the west. Wentworth expressed their opinion when he remarked that this hazing affair only proved that the Pewee was a contemptible little chump.

VIII

THE ARMY GAME

THERE'S no cure like work for all sorts of troubles. Dick found that the pace of the Naval Academy was much faster, especially in Mathematics, than anything he had ever dreamed of in the High School, where he had stood number two in his class.

“That’s the same as being at the head of the class,” observed Zim; “there’s always a girl that stands number one, because, hang it all, girls don’t have anything to do but read love stories and go to the dressmaker, while a fellow has all kinds of important outside interests on his hands.”

But Dick had a new sensation in realizing that there were in his class at the Academy at least fifty who were more “savvy” than he. Still, as far as comparison with his room-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

mate was concerned, he was a bright particular star. In the slang of the Academy, Zim was “wooden.” He floundered horribly in solid geometry, and his attempts to pronounce French drove old Professor de Laclos into a frenzy. Zim had good reason for blessing the day that he had asked Dick to be his roommate, for without the help of the Pewee he would never have “pulled sat” in any subject for a single week with the single exception of Mechanical Drawing, at which he shone.

Wentworth, too, was wooden, and had all he could do to keep satisfactory and play football without wasting any time bothering the Pewee or learning poker from the Bilger.

As Dick’s pile of demerits had put him on “third conduct grade,” he could not get out into town for a little change Saturdays and Sundays unless he “frenched,” that is, skip out of the yard without permission, and he had sense enough not to risk that. The additional penalty if he were caught might have

THE ARMY GAME

been enough to recommend dismissal for "inaptitude." Zim used to laugh at him for refusing to french with him on a favorably dark evening, but secretly he wouldn't have had him run the risk for anything.

"Dick," he told him once, "you're one of those too innocent lads; you'd act so guilty that you'd get pinched beforehand as a suspicious character if you started to swipe a cooky."

As it was, Zim more than made up for Dick's help in his studies by standing between him and the officers of the Academy law. At home Dick always had his aunts to pick up and tidy things, so he just dropped things where he finished with them. It came as a hard jolt to be held responsible for the looks of the room, and to have those looks correspond exactly with the commands of the Regulation Book. He found that he had to make his bed and sweep his room every day, and at first he hadn't the faintest idea how either was done. The books on the top of the

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

locker had to be arranged in order according to the size of the book; the Regulations had to occupy the precise centre of the table, the shoes had to lie side by side under the foot of the bed—and so on.

Zim, who was familiar with all these regulations before he entered, thanks to his uncle, and had a knack for keeping out of trouble anyway, was always on his friend's tracks, pulling things to rights, calling his attention in the rough way of boys to the loose ends of his wardrobe, until Dick began to have a glimmering of the idea of what “shipshape” means. When two midshipmen have a room together, it is the rule for the two to alternate each week in being responsible for the condition of the room. A “name plate” is hung on the inside of the locker door, with a name on each side, which is supposed to be turned at the end of every week. For several weeks Zim kept the plate reading “Zimmerman,” and more than once he quietly shouldered the responsibility and the de-

THE ARMY GAME

merits for some disorder that was Dick's fault, when the latter was out of the room and the inspecting officer unexpectedly looked in. Still, in spite of his roommate's help, Dick found himself getting a demerit here and another there till his pile began to give him a good deal of worry.

Zim, on the other hand, could "knock seven bells" out of a regulation and not get reported for it. His specialty was frenching. At first he pretended that a beautiful young lady enjoyed his attentions on these evening excursions, but after awhile his chum discovered that the romantic knight had no other object than to visit the house where he had boarded as a candidate and fill his rotund person with chocolate tea cakes that his kind landlady made twice a week, largely for his benefit. When his little bluff about a romance had been exploded, he never failed to bring back one of these delicacies to his chum, stowing it inside his blouse in some miraculous fashion. (It must be explained that carrying

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

bundles in the yard is an offense punished by fifty demerits.)

“How in thunder do you do it without getting caught?” inquired Dick one evening with his mouth half-full of one of these trophies.

“If you won’t breathe it or try to use my patent, I’ll remark that ’neath the wall behind the Chapel lies a slice of timber, to wit, a board, not large enough to attract notice, but when leaned against the wall sufficient to hoist my Apollo-like form over into the back yard of one Herr Strübel, who plays the trombone in our band. He is a good friend of mine; last year he used to sing songs of the Fatherland with me, and he says I’m the only man in the Academy who pronounces the ü in his name correctly. As long as I don’t hit any of his rose bushes I’m welcome, and he’s got a convenient packing box for me to land on.”

“Well, while you were gone,” said Dick, “I put in recreation hour boning my math——”

THE ARMY GAME

“Ach du lieber! Don't you know that it's against the unwritten law of this place to study outside of study hours unless you are in real danger of bilging?”

“Why?”

“Well, I know it isn't considered square. Hold on now, don't get mad. The idea is that you try to get ahead of your classmates by boning at a time when the rest of the crowd is having a hard-earned good time.”

“Oh, piffle! Your unwritten laws make me tired. Let me tell you right now, if you don't get busy you'll be back in the brewery. You were unsat in two subjects last week, and pretty badly too.”

“Oh, well, wait till next month; I'll have the hang of the profs then and I'll be sat every week. Speaking of bilging, don't forget to add up your demerits and bust out cryin'!”

The matter of demerits was a sore point with Dick. He had written home about them, not realizing that his aunts would take them

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

as evidence of really bad conduct. In reply, came a long letter from Aunt Hester, in which she was clearly of the opinion that her dear boy was going wrong. She had been opposed to the idea of the Naval Academy from the start, was it that Mr. Zimmerman that was leading him astray? (“Luckily I never let on that his father is a brewer!” thought Dick.) Was her boy failing in his religious duties now that he was in the worldly atmosphere of the navy? And so on. Toward the end the tone changed, and she insinuated that “those military bullies” were picking on her Dicky boy because he was young and inexperienced and did not come from a navy family, and she wound up as affectionately as in the beginning she had been severe. As usual, in the end her heart triumphed over her sense of duty. What Dick minded worse was that she had evidently spoken to her pastor about him, for the next mail brought a long letter of preachments from the Rev. Mr. Ringgold, which made Dick rebel with a hot

THE ARMY GAME

sense of injustice from his own home folks. He disliked the worthy pastor, for the reason that the latter was, while earnest and conscientious, utterly lacking in knowledge of boy nature, and this sermon was a good deal of a dose.

“Suppose I do have forty demerits already,” he grumbled, “I’m not a jail-bird!” Then he began to be afraid of what Uncle Tom would write him, for the latter was famous among the members of the Maine bar for his powers of sarcasm, and Dick had often winced under them himself. The letter from the Rev. Mr. Ringgold was followed shortly by a familiar envelope bearing the stamp of Thos. D. Clinton, attorney-at-law, in the corner.

“Dear Dick,” ran the letter, “I’m glad you wrote frankly about those demerits. I think I can explain them to your aunts. You are developing gump, as I hoped you would. Get on to the regulations, and stick it out there no matter what any Wentworth or

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Bilger says or does to you. Uncle Tom.” Inside the letter was a new ten-dollar bill!

This short letter did Dick a world of good. He had to put up with the unpleasant attitude of those of his classmates who took their cue from Wentworth or the Bilger, and they were rather numerous. He found it hard to make new friends on that account. One afternoon in the gym he asked his old antagonist Rior-dan about a point in boxing.

“Gowan, ye Pewee,” retorted the Irish-man, “I ain’t got nuthin’ to do with a feller that would make a whine to the Commandant ’cause a first classman cussed him out, see?” Whereupon he turned on his heel and walked away. This was the version which the Bilger and Wentworth had spread in the minds of a large number of his class, that the Pewee had “tattled,” “whined,” “played baby” to the Commandant and they didn’t care to have anything to do with him.

His new friend Douglas he found true to his word but very reserved, and seemed to

THE ARMY GAME

repel any advances made by the little Plebe. As Zim said, he was not a complimentary person. He took Dick on the gym floor to instruct him in the elements of boxing, and took about all the conceit out of him the first day. Heretofore Dick had thought of his smallness as a misfortune, like a wart on the nose, but to be dismissed cheerfully. Most military geniuses had been entrusted to small bodies anyway; Napoleon, Nelson, Farragut, were all small men. But when Douglas grew eloquent over the Pewee's small chest expansion, his slender muscles, his tendency to hang his head, etc., the boy "got busy." In addition to the boxing, Douglas prescribed for his pupil a set of gym exercises, which Dick went to work at as earnestly as if they had been ordered by the Secretary of the Navy.

Meanwhile, Bullen was as annoying as he could be under the circumstances and hunted opportunities for getting the Pewee on the report. But as he was a "clean-sleeve,"

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

that is, only a private in the brigade, he did not have many chances. Anyway, Dick was too healthy and busy a youngster to let small persecutions bother him, especially as Zim's other friends in the class—and Zim was very popular—were friendly to him on Zim's account.

The busy weeks trotted by with one great excitement on each Saturday—the football game. Like almost every one else, Dick talked little but football “dope” outside of actual studying, reciting, and sleeping. West Point was well in the lead in the number of victories won in the Army-Navy series, and accounts in the Sunday papers indicated that the school on the Hudson was showing unusual strength this year. The burning question was, would we—could we—develop a team that would manage to beat them? The conduct of each player, the good and weak points of any promising substitute were hotly discussed at every mess table and during recreation hours, and the coaches were alter-

THE ARMY GAME

nately praised to the skies and cursed to the bottomless pit.

Wentworth had made good from the start, once or twice he had been relegated to the scrubs because of overconfidence and a reluctance to follow orders from the coach. Another Plebe, a broad-faced Swede from North Dakota, succeeded in capturing the position of centre, and of course all the Plebes swore that half a dozen more would be on the team were it not for the prejudice against the entering class.

Shortly before *the* game it was announced that West Point had sent down an unusually large pool bet of \$4000 to be covered by the midshipmen. The leaders among the first classmen issued the order that every man in the Academy should contribute five dollars toward covering this amount. For the week following talk was divided between the rival players on the rival teams and the betting odds. When Dick learned that West Point was the favorite in Philadelphia and New

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

York at the odds of five to four, he asked innocently why the midshipmen hadn't demanded those odds. But he was instantly overwhelmed with scorn for not realizing the horrible disloyalty of admitting in an inter-academy bet that the chances were in favor of West Point. It was the first bet he had ever made, but he made no demurrer about parting with his precious five dollars, though deep in his heart he never expected to see it again. West Point had beaten Yale that year! Never mind, a man must be loyal! Zim was very busy and important indeed. He was placing several large side bets on his own hook, and his uncle had written him from Guantanamo, commissioning him to place fifty dollars more on his account.

“There are just two men in this Academy who won't put up a cent on the game,” said Zim to his chum as they were starting over again the endless talk over the Great Event. “They are both first classmen, and the class naturally don't make any noise about it; but

THE ARMY GAME

I overheard some of them cussin' and I knew from what they said who the fellows must be."

"Who—the Bilger for one?" inquired Dick. "He's a tin horn sport."

"Bilger nuthin'! He's handling a lot of bets on the side. One's the Y. M. C. A. president, old Peterson, the Gospel Shark, and the other is your dear friend the Rhino."

"Douglas?"

"Yep. That just shows why he's so unpopular. Always up to something like that. Don't let him convert you to doing stunts like that now!"

That same afternoon Dick had an hour of boxing with Douglas. At the end he said:

"I suppose you've put up your five dollars for the pool?"

"Yes, sir."

"Accustomed to betting?"

"No, sir. I thought of this not so much as a bet as a way of showing one's loyalty to the Navy."

"Of course, that's what they all say. Do

"PEWEE" CLINTON, PLEBE

you realize that this business of placing heavy bets on the Army-Navy game reduces it to the dirty level of prize fighting or a cocking main? Loyal! It suggests the very opposite. It means that West Pointers and Midshipmen haven't sufficient interest in the game as a great athletic event between rival schools but they've got to have the excitement of making or losing money on it."

"But the officers do it themselves," pleaded Dick in justification, "and all college men bet on their big games."

"And that's where they are all wrong. Some of them know it, but they find it easier to go with the crowd. It's unpopular to stand alone for your convictions." Douglas grew morose as he spoke. "Copy what the others do," he continued sarcastically, "and when you graduate you'll have a personality like your uniform, cut according to regulation and not different from anybody else's."

"Queer duck, all right," thought Dick on his way to quarters. "I don't see why he

THE ARMY GAME

should get so sore on me because I put up my little five for the navy and he wouldn't." And he began to look upon his first classman friend as a sort of mild lunatic, in spite of the four stripes of rank on his sleeve.

Finally the Great Day, the Saturday after Thanksgiving, arrived. When the bugle "busted" reveille that frosty morning, eight hundred pairs of feet flew out from the sheets and smacked on the floor with a suddenness most unusual. Breakfast was treated as a necessary evil to be got out of the way as soon as possible. Then the entire brigade fell into formation, awaiting orders to march to the trains. Over their dark blue ulsters were slung blue and gold megaphones, and every man carried a navy banner on a small bamboo cane.

"Company-y-y, squads right, full step—*march!*" bawled Dick's company commander, repeating orders from Brigade and Battalion commanders, and away they marched through the yard out into the town, Dick's

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

first visit since he accumulated his pile of demerits. Knots of girls, waving navy banners and adorned with gorgeous chrysanthemums, stood on every street corner smiling their prettiest on the midshipmen, and causing every man of them to stiffen his spine, especially the company officers, who looked ahead of them with a very stern air indeed. As soon as the station was reached, the companies broke ranks and piled into the waiting cars, where, with discipline relaxed, the mid-dies laughed, cheered, and sang till the cars were filled and the long train pulled out on its journey to Philadelphia.

All the way the cars fairly boiled over at the windows with the laughing, singing and cheering. All the way, except while the trains passed through Baltimore.

“Why this sudden quiet?” asked Dick as the cars approached the “Monumental City.”

“Because,” replied Zim with the air of one who imparted elemental information,

THE ARMY GAME

“it’s bad luck. Every time the Brigade has cheered passing through Baltimore the Navy team has been beaten.”

The rest of the three hours passed quickly, and then as the “sections” of the trains came in and unloaded their cargoes of midshipmen, the latter hastily fell into line and then broke ranks for liberty till the game was called. Dick and Zim wandered about Philadelphia together watching the gay crowds of army and navy partisans till time for lunch. The University of Pennsylvania, on whose gridiron the Army-Navy games are played, entertained cadets and middies at lunch in the gymnasium. There Zim and Dick hurried at the luncheon hour and enjoyed a rather scrambled but interesting meal. This was a case of grab and eat; but it gave a good opportunity for the gray and the blue to fraternize and jolly each other on the chances of the game. As Zim knew two or three of the West Pointers, Dick had a chance to meet the enemy at close range, and told his chum

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

afterwards that he thought the fellows from the Hudson were certainly fine chaps.

Immediately after luncheon the crowds streamed toward Franklin Field. Just outside the enclosure the entire brigade formed and then marched in, singing “Anchors Aweigh,” with the Naval Academy band in scarlet coats pounding away at the head of the procession. Round the field they marched to the cheers and applause of the spectators. Then the navy goat was led capering round as a mascot, in tow of one of the cheer leaders who had his hands full in managing him. The next moment the dark blue mass surged up over the central block of seats on the North Stand.

Hardly had Dick and Zim clambered into their places away up near the top row when they caught sight of a long, grey-coated column entering the field. This was the enemy! No more fraternal feelings now!

As they marched in, singing their famous “Benny Havens,” with their band thumping

THE 'ARMY GAME

and blaring at the head of the line, all the South Stand, containing the army sympathizers, rose like a wave with cheers and a flutter of pennants. Dick's spine tingled with thrills of excitement. And the middies were good sports, for they gave their opponents a hearty rattle of applause. Round the field swung the cadets with a highly decorated army mule to offset any luck that the navy goat might have brought to the Annapolis team.

Then for a few minutes there was a rollicking duel of songs between the opposing masses of gray and dark blue. Dick had conscientiously learned all the words of all the navy songs, and though his singing was not wonderful he served to prompt Zim, who had a splendid voice, but who had, of course, lost his song card.

Suddenly in a pause some one piped up: "Here they come!" Dick couldn't see over the heads of those who stood in front of him, but he knew without being told who "they"

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

were. Instantly, all hands were whooping the “Four N” yell, but they were not more than half-way through when from the opposite side of the field came “*Army!—Army!—Army!*” telling that the West Point team also was trotting up on the gridiron.

The usual preliminary ball-tossing and limbering up was run through, the captains met in the centre of the field and flipped the coin. In a few minutes the two teams were lined out, with the army captain swinging down on the ball for the kick-off. Swoop! it sailed in the air, long, high and twisting, a beautiful kick, travelling fast before a high northwest wind. Dick’s heart went down before that sign of army prowess, but “Bug” Boothby caught it near the goal posts and advanced it ten yards. The game was on!

Cheer on cheer rolled out from one side or the other at the least excuse for encouragement or just on general principles. The straddling cheer leaders, perched on the fences that lined the gridiron, waved their

THE ARMY GAME

arms like crazy windmills, working as if they thought that the whole fate of the game lay with them.

Oh the torturing excitement of that first quarter! The navy seemed a little slow in waking up and the army backs were smashing through for gains, not long in any case, but just enough to keep them slowly forging down the field toward the navy goal. On account of the strong wind an exchange of kicks always resulted in the army's favor.

"The Siren yell!" Dick heard the hoarse croak of the cheer leader and sprang to his feet with the rest. That most original of the navy yells is used as a last appeal from the anxious sympathizers on the bleachers:

"Hoo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-rah! Hoo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-rah!! Hoo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-RAH!!! NA-VEE!!!"

It seemed to do the work, for the navy line stiffened or else the advance weakened. Anyway, the cadets failed to make the necessary distance by runs. The fullback, relying on

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

the wind, tried for a long drop-kick. As the ball left his toe the spectators rose to their feet. Ah, the ball dropped just short of the cross-bar! One great gusty sigh of relief rose from the navy side of the grandstand to meet another of disappointment from the army crowd. Then the whistle blew and the quarter was over.

A few minutes of hurried buzz of discussion, then the game was on again. This time it was back and forth, back and forth, with neither side getting within striking distance. The wind died down so that it served no longer as a factor in the game. It was a wonderful battle.

During the third quarter the miracle happened. The army, lined up with the ball after a long navy punt, failed on the first try to circle left end. Then came a forward pass. Wentworth, who had played all along like a tiger, made a splendid leap for the ball, caught it, and with the mighty interference of his captain and the fullback, dashed across

THE ARMY GAME

the intervening thirty yards and fell across the line. The whole North Stand went mad with joy. White-whiskered rear-admirals capered and pounded each other on the back, men and women, young and old, stood up and yelled for all they were worth, and the mass of midshipmen just blew up, shooting a great spray of caps high in the air. Down on the field the navy players simply fell on Wentworth's neck and hugged him. As the angle was a bad one, the navy failed to kick the goal, and the score stood 5-0.

The army put up a fierce attack after this, but the quarter was called before any scoring was done. During the next and last quarter, the Army men laid out every ounce of their energy in an effort to score, while their opponents fought to keep the score as it stood. Once more the cadets steadily forced the mid-dies down the field to the danger point. Once more the siren yell. Again the army full-back attempted a kick, a place-kick this time. It was perfect, sailing squarely between the

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

posts. Now it was the turn for the south stand to go wild. But the score was still 5-3 in the navy's favor, and in spite of the vigorous attack of the army that kept the navy men fighting desperately on the defensive and their friends anxious up to the last minute, the score remained the same when the whistle blew to end the game.

At that the navy crowd went mad again. The middies boiled out of their seats on to the gridiron and formed a column that circled the field in the crazy “snake dance,” capering, cap-tossing, howling, singing hoarsely, and with the band in the lead trying to make itself heard above the rest. A stop before the army stand long enough to cheer their defeated friends, and then the column broke ranks. On all hands Wentworth was the hero of the day. Dick tried to forget his dislike of the fellow, and had rah-rahed lustily every time his name had been called by the cheer leaders. It was glorious to win, too. But—if it had only been some one else!



WENTWORTH WAS THE HERO OF THE DAY

THE ARMY GAME

"He'll be worse than ever," thought Dick as he and Zim sat silently together on the homeward trip, with not a shred of voice left to talk with against the clatter of the rails. He did not feel as happy as he expected to over a navy victory. Was it always going to be like this, that everything was to be spoiled by that chump? Suppose it went on for three years more? Worse than that, he would always be running up against Wentworth throughout the entire naval career. What's the use of the navy, anyway, with that kill-joy always on the job? Dark thoughts like these stirred still darker feelings in Dick's mind while he lay curled up next to the car window, pretending to be asleep, as Zim was in good, snoring earnest.

"Stick it out there, no matter what any Wentworth or Bilger says or does to you," were Uncle Tom's words.

"Pshaw! Here I am thinking of chucking the navy just because Wentworth won the game! Fool Kid!" Dick smiled at himself

"PEWEE" CLINTON, PLEBE

and felt better. A few minutes later, under the monotonous clatter of the rails and the joggling of the cars, he followed his chum's excellent example and forgot Wentworth completely.

IX

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

It was a glorious home-coming. The two friends awoke from their nap by the time the train rumbled over the Severn River bridge, and were wide-awake and ready for the triumphal march through the streets of Annapolis, the cheers in the Yard, and the ringing of the 800-year-old Buddhist bell that Commodore Perry brought from Japan, whose bronze tongue speaks only when West Point is humbled in the dust. It was glorious!

But everywhere and in everybody's mouth was the shout for "Wentworth," and no matter how proud and happy Dick was that his alma mater had won, he couldn't fight down that old, ugly resentment over the fact that the man who for no sufficient reason had

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

insulted him at first sight and then deliberately set out to be an enemy to him, should be the hero!

“Well,” croaked Conried as the two were turning in, “it was a great old day, wasn’t it?”

“Great, you bet.”

“But,” sighed Zim, with a comical grin, “the solar system will bust a button trying to hold Wentworth now!”

The next evening—the team always spends the night after the game in Philadelphia—the whole brigade marched out with blazing brooms on their shoulders to greet the victorious team. Again there rose a rollicking chorus of cheers and songs, to the great scandal of the clergymen, whose Sunday evening congregations were demoralized thereby. Again it was the Four N yell for Wentworth chief of all, and it was he who was picked up on enthusiastic shoulders and carried in triumph to the Yard. And he looked very much the hero, as even Dick had to admit,

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

with his graceful athletic figure and handsome head, with the midshipman's cap pushed back with studied carelessness just far enough to give his curly yellow pompadour a chance. On all sides girls were exclaiming that he was the *Sweetest Thing*!

When the procession reached the Yard, the enthusiastic middies who had dragged the two 'buses, containing the football squad, all the way from the station, hauled them round in front of Bancroft Hall. There a colossal bonfire of wastebaskets was set ablaze, and there were more songs and cheers. The coaches and the players were called on for impromptu speeches till the warning notes of supper call. And every one declared that Wentworth made the best speech of the evening.

"Aw shucks!" said Dick resignedly when they were back in their room. "I don't like him and he doesn't like me, but he won the game all right and I guess he earned all that's coming to him. I'm not knocking."

Zim laughed, but it was the laugh of good

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

fellowship and approval. “Yes, the class are all for him now, and what he says goes. That will make it harder for you and me, of course. There’s no question but that he’ll be our class president, and if there’s any other honor they can give him, he’ll get that, too. It’s a deuce of a while since a Plebe won a West Point game and the whole class is chesty about it.”

All that Zim said was true, but Wentworth was too busy enjoying himself as hero to pay any attention to the Pewee, and life for the latter trotted along at its usual quiet pace of studies, recitations, drills and recreation.

“What you got on for this afternoon?” demanded Zim one Saturday after dinner, as he carefully shaved himself of very pale and largely imaginary hairs.

“Well, I thought perhaps I’d——”

“Never mind what you thought,” answered Zim, flipping his lather with a grand air. (Dick hadn’t begun shaving yet.) “It’s time you went round with me to Mrs. Winslow’s. She’s receiving Plebes this afternoon and she

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

asked me to bring you along. It's high time you began to get groomed for society."

"Oh, you la-de-da!" mocked Dick. "You want me to be a pretty parlor ornament for the girls to play with, I suppose."

"If I ever get you so you won't queer yourself and me, too, I'll be lucky, you packet of hayseed!" retorted Zim loftily. "You forget, Kid, what an officer should never forget—and an officer's wife never does—that when you're in the 'Service' you're in Society. If it wasn't for the navy and army an awful bunch of bromides would never see a bridge party in their lives. That's why the girls' schools in Washington advertise Naval Academy hops in their catalogues," continued Zim prancing daintily over to the locker for a fresh collar. "We are very 'eligible.'"

"You conceited chestnut-worm! Well, if I thought I was going to fool round much at pink teas——" began Dick with an air of insulted manhood.

"One of these days your wife will make

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

you,” replied the philosopher calmly. “The ladies eat ’em alive. Get busy now and find your dress jacket.”

Dick reluctantly began to make ready.

“Ever been to an afternoon tea before?”

“No, thank heaven!”

“Well, you look it. Now I’ll play Mrs. Winslow—right centre—and you make your entrance up stage there as the Rube from Maine. Just imagine that I present you to your hostess, and let me see how you can behave.”

Dick, anxious to prove that he wasn’t such a country guy as Zim made out, cheerfully agreed. At the signal, he entered the door.

“Mrs. Winslow,” muttered Zim, “may I present my friend Mr. Clinton?” Then, changing his voice to a sweet soprano, he purred, “Oh, Mr. Clinton, how *terribly* sweet of you to come! Elsie, dear, this is Mr. Clinton.”

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

“Pleased to meet——” began Dick as soon as he could get his face straight.

“Dog-gone you!” bellowed the social instructor. “I just *knew* you’d say ‘pleased to meet you’! I suppose you think you’re back at a Methodist sociable in Skowhegan, huh?”

“I’d a hang sight rather be there than at your blooming tea!” snorted Dick angrily. But he finally submitted to the tutoring with a decent grace for the fun of seeing Conried play Mrs. Winslow. As might be expected, the lesson in deportment was often interrupted by howls of laughter from Dick, and violent explosions of wrath from Zim.

Finally the two set off for Lieutenant Winslow’s quarters in Upshur Row, with Zim pouring into his friend’s ear society “don’ts” very few of which Dick could remember five minutes afterwards.

At the door of the drawing-room Dick nearly “queered the whole game” as Zim

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

hissed in his ear, by starting to laugh when Mrs. Winslow—in exactly the same manner that Zim had mimicked—exclaimed that it was “*terribly* sweet” of Dick to come. However, he smothered the laugh in his handkerchief and coughed two or three times to cover his retreat.

Then Miss Elsie smiled prettily on him from under her aunt’s lee, and simply swept the little Plebe off his feet by assuring him that it was “just *dear*” of him to come around that afternoon. “Men hate teas, you know!” My, but she was pretty! Dick found himself out-lying Ananias by insisting in jerky syllables that he had been very glad indeed to come with Zim. And then the conversation flickered and died out, for Elsie looked absent-mindedly from time to time toward the door of the dining-room, and Dick couldn’t think of a thing to say.

Meanwhile he overheard his hostess bucketing the soft soap on Zim, and was astonished to see that complacent rascal taking the com-

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

pliments without a flush of embarrassment. Not much! He always had some complimentary "come-back" ready, and his eyes were twinkling as if he were enjoying a huge joke.

"Jiminy, he's a wonder!" sighed Dick enviously.

Just then another squad of Plebes arrived, who also had to be presented to Miss Elsie, and Zim, grasping the dumb Pewee by the arm, led him away with a whispered, "Don't block the passage at the door, you gawk!"

As Dick cast one lingering, regretful look back at Elsie's pretty blond head, he was shocked to hear her telling one of the newcomers—a very commonplace chap, too—how sweet *he* had been to come round that afternoon. And her aunt was plying the same slush-bucket compliments on somebody else, the same that he had heard her use on the incomparable Zim!

When Dick and Zim entered, the room was fairly well filled with their classmates, but so many of them were in Dick's condition of

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

paralyzed brain and tongue that the atmosphere was rather funereal. Dick slipped off into the shade of a rubber plant, but Zim sailed in and stirred things. In a few minutes he had the crowd laughing and chattering. He told stories on the fellows, and jollied the girls, till Dick saw the hostess turn toward Zim with a expression of gratitude that was genuine.

The next thing that Dick was conscious of was the thrilling fact that the lovely Miss Elsie was bearing down on him. His heart beat fast and his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, but he was cut off from his convoy by a ring of girls and fellows. Oh, for Zim at his elbow! Oh, if he could only think of something to say! She *was* a queen!

Elsie, however, was primed and loaded.

“Wasn’t the army game *simply grand?*”

“Sure.”

“Why, when Mr. Wentworth—I mean when we got that touchdown—I thought I’d just *die* with joy! Didn’t you?”

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

Dick noticed that she had a very pretty color, but for the life of him he couldn't think of anything to say. He cleared his throat and gulped. How in thunder did Zim do these things? Oh, for an inspiration!

"Isn't it too *lovely*," she gurgled on, "that a Plebe won the game? The upper classmen are so *dreadfully* conceited!"

"Yes, indeed."

"And they say Mr. Wentworth is so popular, too!"

"Do you like basket-ball?" Dick was so bent on getting the conversation away from that confounded Wentworth that he actually spoke four words in a string.

"Just *crazy* about it!" Her eyes wandered again to the dining-room. "Now don't you want to come into the dining-room and have something to eat?"

"Certainly!" cried Dick right off the bat. Then he wondered with a hot blush if that didn't sound impolite when so sweet a girl had been talking to him of her own accord.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

She didn't notice the remark, however, for she towed him as far as the portieres and hailed a waiter who was passing the provender.

To Dick's relief he saw that Zim stood near at hand doing a big business in cakes and ices and jollyng two girls at the same time. But he was not so pleased to see in a far corner that everlasting Wentworth graciously accepting the frank admiration of three pretty girls. When his eye met Dick's, his face looked as if he had smelt something very unpleasant, and, excusing himself, he stalked grandly out of the room. But Dick didn't let the incident spoil his appetite. If he wasn't much on small talk, he could certainly punish the grub. Finally, after a square meal, Zim carried him off and got him out of the door.

“Say,” remarked the Pewee, “I did pretty well, eh? You didn't see me stepping on anybody's dress or spilling chocolate on the rug!”

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

“You!” snorted his chum pityingly. “You rube, your hands hung like hams in a butcher’s window. Your mouth wore a frozen grin all the time and your eyes looked scared to death. Every time a skirt spoke to you, you blushed as if you’d been caught stealing the spoons. You had about as much come-back in you as a mashed potato.”

“Shucks! Who wants to be a lady’s man, anyway?” Then, after a pause, “Say, Miss Elsie’s mighty pretty, isn’t she?”

“Aw well, I’d give her a 2.8.”

“2.8? She rates a 4.0! Think of her hair, Zim, that real golden——”

“Golden, perhaps, but not real. Most of it came from the department store, specially those wormy things on the back of her head.”

“I don’t believe it!” Dick was indignant.

“If you had a sister, Dick, you wouldn’t be such a fool. You are just the kind of a trusting lobster that marries a gold brick the minute he graduates.”

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Dick wondered what his English professor would say to that for a “mixed metaphor,” and inquired what a gold brick was.

“Did you see that faded remnant with the jimmy jaw and the leather face who poured chocolate? She’s one. She’s rounded the Cape of Good Hope, all right. Lots of ’em like that come down here, and a hostess is up against it to know what to do with ’em. The game is to feed up a bunch of fellows in advance and make one of them promise to take to the next hop, ‘my cousin, Miss Smith—a *very* sweet girl—coming down for a few days from Philadelphia.’ Then, if he’s innocent enough, he may even get roped to the altar. Lots of ’em do, mostly rough-necks that never saw a woman out of a calico wrapper before they came here.”

“Gee but you’re high and mighty!” sneered Dick. “How many proposals have you had this season? Anybody’d think the women were all after you with bloodhounds!”

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

Dick had old-fashioned notions about "chivalry" and his tone was very sarcastic.

"Well, I've been behind the scenes and I know," answered the cynic. "Let me put you wise right now. Society is only a match-making institution, and it's founded mostly on shams."

Dick recollected those purring compliments from Mrs. Winslow and said nothing.

"Now, Mrs. Winslow's game is very simple. She gives it out that she 'just loves to have young people around,' but what she is really doing is to get all these Plebes, whom nobody looks at now, her devoted friends. Later, when Elsie is 'out,' they'll be sure to give her a good rush; and by the time we graduate she'll be engaged to somebody in the class. Then she'll be married into the navy and safely off her aunt's hands, see?"

Engaged! Dick thrilled at the idea. He had been pretty hard hit. Suppose *he* were the lucky man! "Well, I'm not for the

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

society game then,” he said with emphasis. “If it’s such a farce, what’s the use?”

“If you’re on, you can have a lot of fun and not get caught,” laughed the cynic; “that’s me.”

“Shucks! Some girl must have given you the frosty mitt. I’ll bet you’re jealous because Miss Elsie didn’t come up and speak to you as she did to me.” Dick was bluffing grandly. “What would you say if I told you that I was invited there to Sunday dinner?”

“I’d say you were a liar, my dear Gaston. I saw Mrs. Winslow send Elsie to you because you looked so forlorn under that rubber plant. Don’t you know anyway that she’s dotty about Wentworth? He goes there almost every Sunday. Didn’t you see her face when she came in the door and saw those other girls with him? She could have killed ’em by slow torture!”

Ouch! That deadly pang of jealousy! So that’s why she would rattle on so about Wentworth! Zim grinned in a heartless manner at

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY

the wound he had made. Dick turned his back on his friend and ground his teeth. Always that confounded Wentworth! "No matter where I turn in this place I bump hard against that slob," he thought angrily. He flung out of the door, paying no heed to Zim's jeers, and spent the rest of the afternoon trying to forget his murderous inclinations in the cheerful pages of "Puck." In fact, it was nearly four days before the scar on his deeply wounded heart was quite healed.

X

PLEBE CHRISTMAS

DICK soon had his chance to get it back on his chum for all the latter's superiority in social etiquette.

"Look here, you!" he called to the careless Zim one evening as he was getting ready to go out in town, "cut out your frenching to-night and bone. You're on the tree again in three subjects, and you're going to bilge at Semi-Ans, if you don't take a big brace."

"Oh, I'll be all right," he answered with the usual confidence, "I'm not getting a square deal just now, that's all. You know my mathematic professor is Belloc, his father was a frog-eating Frenchman, and of course he and the French professor are down on me because of my grandfather."

"Grandfather? Didn't you mean to say

PLEBE CHRISTMAS

‘my uncle’?’ (Zim had by this time been pretty well teased out of referring to his uncle.)

“Don’t you try to be fresh, now, you’re not big enough! My grandfather was colonel of artillery at Gravelotte—the artillery that played the deuce with that charge of the French cavalry, you know.” Zim cocked his head proudly. “I let on once about him, and I suppose these Frenchmen heard about it. Wait till we change instructors and I get somebody that’s fair. I’ll show you!”

“Huh!” snorted Dick, “you’re plain wooden, that’s all, and lazy on top of that!”

The change of instructors came at the end of the month, and as Zim’s averages did not rise as rapidly as he had prophesied, he was finally compelled to forego many of his frenching trips and stay “boning” with his roommate instead, as he had been advised to do, in order to keep off the “Christmas tree.” Dick’s “I told you so!” was cruelly emphatic.

When a midshipman is reported as unsatis-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

factory in a study at the end of a week, he is said to be “on the tree” or to “hit the tree.” When his name appears on the list of those who are warned on account of being unsatisfactory at the time of the December examinations, he is said to be on the “Christmas tree.”

It is a danger signal for bilging, and happy-go-lucky Zim had at last sat up and taken notice. He suddenly became very humble and grateful. Dick lorded it over him, but no teacher of the deaf and blind ever spent more patience to the square inch than he did over his careless and wooden roommate. Zim never had learned to study in the first place, and, spurred by the terror of bilging, began to learn how for the first time. Dick found, too, that the effort of trying to make things clear to Zim made him a better master of those lessons himself, and his own averages went up, too.

During this time he made only one deliber-

PLEBE CHRISTMAS

ate break of the regulations and that was at the suggestion of his chum.

“Look here, Pewee,” he urged from time to time, “why don’t you ‘fume’? Don’t be such a blamed mollycoddle. Everybody smokes; there aren’t half a dozen men in the Academy that don’t. And I’ll bet your Uncle Tom does. It’s only sissies and ministers that don’t burn the weed.”

To be called a mollycoddle or a prig was a touchy point with Dick and he made up his mind that he’d show ’em. It was not hard to “steal a fume” on Dick’s floor, where there were a number of vacant rooms, moderately safe from inspection, and Dick was becoming almost proficient in the manly art of rolling a cigarette when Douglas one day smelled Bull Durham on his young friend’s breath.

“You are on the report for evidences of using tobacco,” he said sternly, “and I want to see you in my room right after drill.”

Dick thought it was pretty rank for the old

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Rhino to “pap” him like that, and he would have resented the order to appear if he had dared, for he had other plans for that hour after drill. But a first classman’s word is law and Dick meekly appeared as directed.

“Now,” said Douglas without ceremony, “I want to talk straight goods to you. I’m mightily disappointed to find out that you are taking to tobacco, because you are a fool to do it. You think it makes you manly, eh? Look at yourself, you narrow-chested, five-foot-nothing, spindle-legged insect. Why, if you want to look manly, your business is to work up that Pewee shape of yours into something respectable, and you won’t do it smoking.

“Furthermore, it makes me tired to see you so lacking in backbone. As I told you before, you think you must do as other people do because you aren’t brave enough to be different. You know the Y. M. C. A. president, ‘Gospel’ Peterson? Most fellows sneer at him because he’s an old-time Methodist who

PLEBE CHRISTMAS

is all the time trying to 'save their souls.' He honestly thinks that they'll go to an everlasting hot hell if they aren't 'saved,' and he's brave enough to act up to his convictions. I'm not of his opinions, but I respect him more than any other man in this Academy, because he's not afraid of being laughed at, or of being called 'queer' or unpopular, so long as he is doing what he believes is right. You know that you are a fool to smoke, but you're ashamed not to. Either give me your word now to cut it out or you needn't call on me again in the gym, I can tell you that."

Dick hesitated; he felt a mixture of all kinds of feelings at this "Dutch uncle" interview, but finally he said, "I cut it out, sir."

"Good!" exclaimed the other, his face lighting with one of his unusual smiles and his hand extended in friendship, "now beat it!"

Dick never reported this interview to his chum, but explained his quitting the weed on the ground of demerits.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

There is no Christmas vacation at the Naval Academy; the best one can look forward to is the day itself, which is an unrestricted holiday for all, regardless of demerits, and a freedom from drills during the week between Christmas and New Year's. One feature of the holiday Dick looked forward to with eager interest and that was the annual frolic of the first classmen, together with the special privileges allowed the down-trodden Plebes. Just as the slaves in Rome were allowed the upper hand once a year during the “Saturnalia,” so the Plebes have their innings on Christmas day.

On Christmas eve Dick was approached by the “five-striper,” Mayhew, the football captain and cadet commander of the brigade, who gave him a mysterious order in a sepulchral whisper that fairly made his head swim. Then before taps hand-bills were passed through all the corridors, advertising in scarehead type, “Startling, Stunning, Stupendous Spectacle” of freaks and wonders

PLEBE CHRISTMAS

gathered from all parts of the world at the cost of "billions of bullion and billows of blood!" due to appear the following morning.

The rising bugle "busts" at 6.30, but on Christmas morning everybody's alarm clock slam-banged at six, and the bugler might have saved himself the trouble. It was dark and cold, but Dick and Conried were scrambling into their clothes like boys running to a fire. They were not a minute out of their beds before they heard on the deck below a confused uproar which they knew to be the first classmen falling in for their "P-rade." By the time the boys got their heads outside the door they could hear the crowd tramping through the corridor below, bawling:

There's one wide river, there's one wide river to cro-oss !
There's one wide river, there's one wide river to cross !

A song that has somehow become sacred to the first classmen on Christmas morning. Suddenly the singing was broken off by the class yell. Boom, bang! Evidently several

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

pieces of the Naval Academy Band had been bribed to leave their beds and contribute music to the occasion. And now the procession came, stamping, and whooping their hymn up to the corridor above.

It was a racket to shake the granite walls of Bancroft Hall, but for a wonder no officer-in-charge stuck out his head to bellow “Pipe down!” and put everybody on the report for “creating a disturbance.” Not to-day! thought Dick with a chuckle. Last night those fellows would have been reported if the tags on their shoelaces had been frazzled. Now they came dressed as Indians, ballet girls, cowboys, bandits, frogs, chanticleers, Nicaraguan generals,—everything imaginable,—not forgetting Santa Claus (the class president) who wagged his hoary beard at the head of the procession.

After every deck in Bancroft Hall had resounded with the class yell, he led his followers out into the yard, and the rest of the

PLEBE CHRISTMAS

Academy, especially the Plebes, trooped behind to watch their antics.

It was a chilly morning, with snow on the ground and more dropping on the bare collar-bones of the ballet "girls," but all hands went rollicking across the yard to give the Superintendent and the Commandant a cheer and a Merry Christmas. Then they disappeared into the Armory to hold private revel round a huge class Christmas tree.

All this was nuts to Dick after the stern tyranny of the Regulation book, and he was anticipating more fun on his own hook. Soon came the call for breakfast formation. Shortly before this the first classmen had been scampering back to quarters to get into uniform, but when the formation took place it had a queer look. The first classmen had changed blouses with the Plebes. The former now stood in the humble ranks of the latter, and the Plebes were now the officers of the brigade. Each company was com-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

manded by the smallest Plebe in the company, and in front of the brigade stood the smallest Plebe of all—the Pewee!

Here was the chance for the down-trodden worms to turn, to get square for the months of “bracing” and “cussing-out” that they had silently and meekly endured, and every little Plebe officer was doing his best to “run” the upper classmen. The real brigade commander, Mayhew, came slouching along in Dick’s blouse—which refused to meet anywhere in front and left about five inches of wrist visible on each arm—and with his cap cocked over his eye. At the same time Dick was standing somewhere inside of Mayhew’s coat, with his hands lost to the finger tips. But he had not forgotten that first day when Mayhew joshed him about his football record.

“Shake a leg there!” he shouted. “You are reported for unmilitary bearing. Pick that cap off your ear and set it where it belongs!”

PLEBE CHRISTMAS

“Aye, aye, sir,” answered the first class-man meekly.

Dick had to remember Bughouse Boothby, too. “Wipe that silly smile off your face!” he cried, pointing at the grinning Boothby. “If you can smile like a human being, do it once and pass it on to Rhino Douglas!”

Douglas, who was looking on with a rather bored air, flushed with surprise and embarrassment and grinned. At this unusual spectacle his classmates set up a howl of laughter.

Dick then spied his enemy, the Bilger. “Down with your elbows, Bullen, shake those cards out of your sleeves and——” but nobody ever knew how the Pewee was going to finish that remark for such a howl of ohs and whoops of derision burst out that nothing could have been heard. The Bilger was evidently hit hard, for he cursed under his breath and looked black as a thunder cloud for a second, and then made a dismal effort to grin.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

While Dick was getting in his licks, the company commanders were keeping up a scattering fire on their victims. Then Dick summoned the adjutant, one of the brightest fellows in the class, who read the conduct report and the orders for the day. Strange to say, all the offenders were first classmen, and their misdemeanors included strange offenses like “boxing the compass without gloves.” The report over, “Squads left and right!” Dick shouted, and the brigade marched off to breakfast.

After breakfast things settled down more nearly to their usual level, but there were the packages of Christmas presents and eatables to be seen and sampled in all the rooms of one's friends, and the whole day free to do exactly as one pleased. All the privileges forbidden by custom to the Plebes were this day theirs. Every one of them made it a point to swagger through the “short cut” to quarters, rest their arms on the mess table,

PLEBE CHRISTMAS

use the forbidden stairs, and break at least a handful of minor regulations without mishap.

Douglas passed Dick after dinner as he and Zim were going out in town to the "show."

"Thou didst well, my son," said he solemnly, "saving thy ill-timed jest on me, for which I will repay thee anon. As for Bullen, verily thou didst smite him hip and thigh." And he went on without cracking a smile.

"He's a funny Ike," remarked Conried. "Say, but you certainly did put the hooks into the Bilger! What everybody says about him on the QT is that he cheats, and that's why your josh about the cards up his sleeve was such a hot one. I'm afraid he won't forgive you in a hurry. Especially after your carelessness in kicking him on the jaw that time." And Zim's plump sides shook with his chuckles.

"Well, I'm glad I got it back at him again," laughed Dick, as the two entered the

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

theatre, “Let’s forget him; here’s where you get your money out for moving mellow-drammer.” Soon they were waiting for the curtain to rise on the troubles of “Bessie, the Beautiful Boiler-maker.”

XI

THE MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION

DICK soon discovered that his public "ragging" of the Bilger seemed to be less resented by that individual than by his follower, Wentworth, who gave it out that the Pewee was blanked, malodorously "ratey." And as Wentworth had now a long string of henchmen who basked in his glory and echoed all his sayings, it was not long before this statement of the case came to Dick's ears.

"By George," he groaned to Zim, "I can't sneeze around here without offending somebody, especially that tin god Wentworth. Didn't I have a perfect right to roast the Bilger?"

Conried grinned. "Sure. The trouble is that you hit the bull'seye and hit it hard. If Bullen doesn't cheat in poker, there's a

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

whole lot of fellows in this place who are off their bearings. Wentworth is hot-airing round now because, though he himself was getting a bit skittish about the Bilger's game a few weeks ago, he thinks now that the fellow must be sure enough honest because Bullen has let him get ahead awhile. Went may be a football hero, but he certainly is the prize sucker.”

“It isn't customary to roast a first class-man so hard, they tell me,” frowned the other.

“You bet it ain't. That's where your natural outfit of gall comes in,” laughed Zim.

“Hanged if I care!” replied Dick. “Bullen is a rotten egg, and I only wish I had smashed him worse.”

It was not long after Christmas before the shadow of “semi-ans” streaked across the Academy, and in the minds of many quite blotted out the joy of living. The best upper-class talent was mustered to save the wooden Wentworth by daily and nightly coaching.

MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION

Zim also groaned and sweated during most of his recreation periods over his math, Dago (French), and English, in all of which subjects he stood dangerously near unsatisfactory.

Under a ruling of the Academic Board, those whose term averages were as high as 3.0 (on a basis of 4.0) were excused from examination and Dick had no examination to dread in anything but his mathematics.

For that matter most of his classmates were on the anxious seat there too, but an unfeeling instructor had marked him down close to unsat for the month of December, and he knew that the semi-ans always operate to push a man's averages a good deal lower. In fact, he got so worried that he gave up two fine skating afternoons to bone mathematics, and he loved to do his fancy loops and grape vines better than anything else. One hour of each day Dick devoted to the punching bag and the swimming pool, while Zim took his recreation and exercise in frenching,

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

because he said that was the most diverting sport he knew of and it didn't take much time. The rest of their recreation hours the two boys put on their books.

A few days before the dreaded week of semi-ans began Conried burst into the room with a whirl.

“Dick, our lives are saved! Whoop de addy de aye!”

“Why this noisesomeness?” asked Dick, astonished to see his plump friend spinning ballet steps round the study table.

Zim struck a dramatic attitude. “Listen, my children, and you shall hear,

“Of the nigger's pants and their words of cheer. Whoop de addy de aye!”

“Pants? Avast, I will souse the bugs in your binnacle!” and Dick reached for the water pitcher.

“Hold!” and Zim just saved himself from a wetting. “’Tis thusly. Wentworth—oh, why have you and I knocked him before?—paid one of the mess-boys—who is a friend of

MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION

one of the mokes in the mathematics department—to sit on the neostyle in his white duck working pants, when no one was looking, savvy. And then covered it up with a long coat so that no one caught on afterwards. Said neostyle was printing the semi-an exam questions, you understand? Wentworth got the pants long enough to copy off the questions, and then, instead of keeping them to himself he called in the fellows this afternoon right after drill, and everybody's got a copy of the questions. Whoop de addy de aye!" and Zim cavorted again, waving the precious document over his head. "After all, old Went isn't so bad, eh?"

He stopped and looked astonished. Dick didn't seem enthusiastic. He was eyeing the floor and seemed very much embarrassed.

"Great Scott, have *you* gone bug? This is a nice reward I get for——" He did not finish his sentence but stood frowning at his roommate. Meanwhile Dick had been thinking very hard. He had an uneasy feeling

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

about the thing anyway, and he couldn't get rid of that statement of Douglas, “You must do as other people do because you're not brave enough to be different.”

The very fact that it was so much easier now to go with the crowd than not to, suddenly made Dick feel that if he did it would be on account of weakness and cowardice. “I'll bilge first!” he said to himself, and drew a long breath.

“I'm awfully obliged,” he said slowly, scratching at the desk with a pencil, “but I'd rather not see those questions.”

Zim whistled with astonishment. “You *are* crazy. Why, man, that exam is a hundred times stiffer than I thought those math people would dare to make it. You can never make more than 1.0 on it in the world. Those original probs are the *limit*! It took a savvy second classman an hour and a half to work them out for Wentworth. You can't *touch* 'em! What's the matter, anyway?”

MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION

Dick was silent for a minute before he answered, "Nuthin'."

"I know what's the matter," exclaimed Zim indignantly, "you think it isn't honest, you think it's gouging,* I suppose. Looky here, if it's gouging, everybody that takes the exam will be gouging but you, and we aren't gougers by a long shot!"

Zim was getting hot with indignation against his roommate for the first time in the history of their friendship. "I tell you," he went on, "it's that confounded mollycod-dle, Sunday-School priggishness of yours that your Uncle Tom is trying to have knocked out of you and that will make you simply impossible as a naval officer. My gracious, when my uncle was here, in the days of the old buildings, a fellow crawled into the study window of one of the profs on a long board and got an exam paper that saved a lot of fine fellows from bilging who

*Cheating.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

are now in the service. And no one was any the worse for it. You aren't taking an unfair advantage over your classmates, because they all have an equal whack at the questions, don't you see? That isn't gouging, it's playing a good joke on the math department, that's all."

Dick was still silent. He got up while Zim was talking and stood by the window looking out on the court below.

"Well," continued Zim testily, "if you bust in math, it's your fault. Your kind of virtue is its own reward, all right."

Dick turned round. "See here, Zim," he said quietly, "don't *you* go back on me now. You're the only real friend I have in the class. Can't you let me have my own way? If I'm a fool, it doesn't hurt you any, or anybody else, now does it?"

Zim tramped up and down the room for a minute. He couldn't help thinking of the amount of time Dick took from his own math to shove him along in Dago and English. In

MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION

fact, it was his very fondness for the Pewee that lay at the bottom of his anger. Suddenly he swung around impulsively and grabbed his friend's shoulders.

"You're a dog-gone, bull-headed, crazy loon of a Pewee, but you can be as crazy as you please!" And he banged out of the door to enjoy things with some of his more jubilant classmates.

Dick had made the decision, but he didn't feel as happy as the man of virtue does in story books. Left to himself, he figured out the chilly prospects. The whole class had been unusually low in mathematics, and it had been the "dope" that the department wouldn't have the nerve to put up a list of 75 or 100 "unsats" at the end of a term, but would probably scale all the marks up. Now if all the men who had to take the examination hit a ripping high mark to boost their term averages, there wouldn't be any need of scaling marks up, and Dick would undoubtedly be unsat for the term. He wouldn't be bilged

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

just for one unsat subject, but it would be mighty hard to make that good before June, and if he didn't, why good-by to the naval career and back to Skowhegan!

“Nothing doing except to bone harder,” he soliloquized, and he picked the detested trigonometry off the shelf. Then he squared his elbows, adjusted his eye shade, pulled off his collar and settled down to business.

In a few days it leaked out that the Pewee had refused to see the questions, and the general verdict of the class was that he was “bug.” Wentworth, as usual, expressed himself fluently on the matter. According to him, the Pewee was “putting on to be better than anybody else,” and trying to cast a slur on Wentworth because he had been responsible for getting the questions. Of course, his followers echoed this and Dick was not only Pewee but “Deacon,” “Holy Dicky,” “Parson Pewee,” or “Pope Pious the Punk.” Though Zim couldn't see the matter as Dick did, he sturdily talked back at the others, for

MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION

loyalty to a friend was to him a sacred principle.

In a day or so Dick was surprised to be accosted by Zeke Miller, one of his classmates whom he had known by sight but never spoken to. He was, as Zim had explained, a "rough-neck" from the Arkansas bank of the Mississippi; and he was one of those long, lean, sallow, black-haired fellows who look as if they had had malaria four generations before they were born. He was so green that at first he had been ridiculed to death, but after he had fought two or three of his biggest tormentors, nobody cared to trifle with him any further and he was left severely alone. All that his class knew about him was that he was a mathematics wonder, and that he regularly appeared at Y. M. C. A. meetings, and was spooned on by old Gospel Peterson.

"Mistah Clinton," he began in a rather embarrassed and oratorical way, and looking down from a height of six feet two on the Pewee, "ah hyud suh, that yo ain't lookin'

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

at the exam questions in math, an' ah jes' want to say, suh, ah'd like to shake yo' hand.” Dick instantly lost his little fist in the huge muscular paw extended towards him. He didn't know what to say and felt rather uncomfortable, but this was better than “Pope Pious the Punk.”

“Mah granpap 'lowed that no Yankee hed a sense of honah, suh, but ah'm glad to know times hev changed!” Here the solemn lantern jaw cracked with a grin. “An' ah wanted to say,” he went on, “ah'd be glad to help yo' on these hyah math probs.”

“By George, if you will, you'll deserve the Carnegie medal! Will you, *honest?*” Here was a genuine ray of hope. Every month Miller had stood number one in math, being one of those born mathematicians who seem to take every formula as a matter of course. Imagine being coached by the Wonder! “I'll bat that exam yet!” thought Dick. Then a happy inspiration hit him.

“You've got to take the English exam,

MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION

haven't you?" Dick remembered seeing Miller's name rather frequently on the "tree" in English.

"Yes, ah reckon ah'll bilge in that!" he drawled dolefully. "All these hyuh profs over yondah air Yankees, an' ah cain't get the hang of their sacred Boston dialect like they expect me to."

"Suppose we turn about, then," suggested Dick. "After you've given me an hour in math, I'll give you one in Hill's rhetoric. I've coached my roommate now so that he will make a good mark in any exam they give him."

"Ah'm yo' man!" agreed Miller heartily, and he gave his hand so impulsively that Dick felt his fingers afterwards to see if any bones were broken.

So the work progressed. Miller was a tremendous help to Dick, and vice versa. Dick soon discovered that Miller was a sort of Abraham Lincoln type, who had great natural ability but no advantages whatever. His re-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

markable mind was constantly hampered by his lack of schooling. This was specially true of English, for the fearful mistakes that he made in grammar were to him the only natural way of speaking or writing, and how he had managed to squeak past the entrance examination was a mystery.

With Zim in French and Miller in English, Dick found his time occupied whenever he got away from his own mathematics; but he swore that he learned more math from Miller than from all his instructors together. Things that had been mere parrot repetitions became more understandable than he dreamed they ever could be. And Miller, too, who was sensitive and reticent in classroom, picked up “Yankee language” very well from Dick. Zim occasionally chaffed his roommate about his “rough-neck” friend, but made no further reference to the coming math exam and the questions.

Finally Semi-Annual Week arrived. Zim had to take examinations in everything but

MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION

mechanical drawing, and was really in such danger that Dick loyally neglected his own math to help his despairing roommate. Toward the end came the examination in mathematics. Here was one that, with a single exception, those who had to take were not afraid of. The sections marched to the Academic Building with ill-suppressed grins. Everything had been answered, but by careful arrangement, every man was ordered to "bust" on certain points, which were so distributed as not to arouse suspicion.

Dick alone was anxious. Eagerly he slipped into his seat in the examination room and scanned the paper. *Je-ru-salem!* it *was* stiff all right, as Zim had said. But, as he went to work and felt less nervous, Miller's coaching stood him in good stead. Several things that looked impossible at first came to him after a while, and he dug away at it without looking up for an hour and a half. Then, as he drew a long breath and looked around at his classmates, he had to smile at

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

their clever acting. Wentworth had coached them all to look worried to death and not to write too fast. Wentworth, himself, to set the pace, was putting on the most realistic expression of despair and fiercely gnawing the end of his pencil.

Then Dick went to work again and didn't stop till the room was cleared for the twenty-minute recess. He sought out Zim and began, “Say that *was* pretty stiff, but——”

“Oh, Lord, it's all over!” groaned the other, and then Dick's astonished eye saw his fellow-classmates in all attitudes of very real misery, clenching their fists and cursing bitterly.

“What's the matter?”

“What's the matter? Oh, you're the only one in this bunch to need that explained. They gave us a different exam, see? And that bunch of fellows hot-airing and rowing over there are asking for an explanation from Wentworth.”

Dick felt so much like laughing that he had

MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION

to make a big effort to keep it down in the presence of Zim's despair.

"Oh, well, they can't bilge half the class," he said encouragingly. "Cheer up, I guess you've got a lot of company in misery. I may be with you anyway!"

The second half of the examination Dick got away with rather better than the first, and he would have been greatly pleased with himself except for his worry over the plight of his chum. During the second half a large number simply gave up in despair, and at least half an hour before the end left their papers and marched in doleful squads back to quarters. Consternation reigned in the ranks of the wooden ones that night, nor did it help the popularity of the Pewee when the rumor went the rounds that he had "batted" the examination—and was the only one who did!

Dick and his chum sat talking it over. For the thousandth time Zim wondered how "they" had caught on to the "pinching" of

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

the questions, and as often Dick vowed that he'd be hanged if he could guess.

“Well,” he concluded, “let's put the rest of this p.m. on to-morrow's Dago exam. If you can pull sat in that, you'll be down in only one subject, and they won't bilge you for that.”

“All right,” said Zim resignedly, “let's sling the spaghetti; it's my last hope!”

Long after taps Zim was chanting irregular verbs into Dick's ears till the latter dropped to sleep and Zim forlornly took to his pillow also.

XII

COVENTRY AND THE PEWEE

IT WAS Saturday of Semi-Annual week. On the day before Zim had weathered his French examination with very fair success, thanks to the coaching of his roommate, and he would have been quite cheerful except for his math, in which he knew he had "busted cold." But for that matter so had every one else who had to take the exam except Dick. The two friends were talking it over during the interim between drill and lunch hour, when some one came to the door and called Zim into the corridor. He was out several minutes and when he returned he looked very solemn.

"Dick," said he, "you don't know how the exam paper got changed, do you?"

"Not any more than you do. You don't

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

suppose that I'd tattle about it, do you?" Dick's eyes snapped angrily.

"No, I don't, old man, and I apologize for insulting you by the question," answered Zim, "but a lot of people do, I'm afraid."

"Why should they!" cried the other, leaping to his feet and slamming his book on the table. "By George, it isn't enough that they knock me for what I do, they've got to make up what I don't do as well. It's Wentworth at the bottom of it again, I suppose?"

"Well, he says that the moke that he got the questions from came to him last night and offered to tell him the reason for the change in that exam paper for five dollars and on condition that his name shouldn't be told. Wentworth paid the coon, and he handed out a yarn that he overheard you talking on the avenue with Lieutenant Richardson of the math department, and overheard you say that the exam had been swiped."

"It's a dirty lie of Wentworth's own mak-

COVENTRY AND THE PEWEE

ing!" shouted Dick. "When did he say all this happened?"

"A week ago Tuesday, about half-past five."

"By George, I *did* talk with old Richie that day," said Dick after reflection. "He stopped me to ask how I was getting along in my math, and I just said that I was trying to make up for my woodenness by boning, and I hoped he wouldn't stick too many original probs on the exam. That's every bit I said. He laughed, looked at me in a funny way and gave me a jolly about hoping I'd weather it, and passed on."

"Well, I don't think Wentworth is a liar, and of course I believe you, old man. The trouble lies with that nigger. I'll have to get busy, Dr. Watson," he added with a grin. "I was always thought to resemble William Gillette as Sherlock Holmes." Here he rolled back his sleeves, pretended to give himself a hypodermic injection of cocaine, and stalked

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

out of the door. Zim was such a mimic that, though Dick wasn't feeling very happy, he had to laugh in spite of himself.

Zim went straight to Wentworth, whom he found boiling with fury.

“He's a liar!” he shouted, after Zim had told him of his friend's denial. “I don't believe a word of it. He owns up to talking with Richardson, doesn't he? Well, you bet he let on enough for old Richie to catch on!”

“He's no liar, you overgrown slob!” retorted Zim, trembling with rage, “and no man can say so and have anything to do with me!”

“Who wants to?” was the jeering response.

“Aw Dutchy, get out!” chorused the crowd of Wentworth's followers. “The Pewee is a sneak anyway,” piped up one of them near the door.

“By Jiminy, you'll take that back!” shouted Zim. “*You* are my size!” and he knocked him over a chair. Just then the officer-in-charge was heard coming by on his tour of inspection, and the riot came to a

COVENTRY AND THE PEWEE

sudden end. Zim went out into the corridor, feeling tenderly of his bruised knuckles and very red and out of breath.

“Made a mess of it,” he said to himself with a frown. “I didn’t get the name of the nigger, and got Went and his crowd as sore on me as they are on poor old Pewee. O Lordy! Somebody kick me!”

Whatever mistake Zim made in his first step he tried to make amends for afterwards. He soon got wind of a class meeting at which the Pewee was to be “put in Coventry.” Now to be put in Coventry is the worst punishment that a midshipman can suffer at the hands of his class, and there have been few who have been able to stick it out without resigning. As Zim expected that Wentworth would try to do this, he was not unprepared.

“I’ll have to get busy!” he told himself, and he did with a will.

Fortunately, there was no chance of a meeting before recreation hour Monday, and there was more available time Sunday than

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

any other day for politics. “Dutchy” was well liked by a large number of his class, for he had a very attractive personality and made friends without trying. He was also a good talker and knew how to approach different sorts of fellows. But he had against him all the prestige of Wentworth, the hero of the Army game, and all the soreness of the men who had failed in the examination, and it was a big job to tackle. There were, however, a number of fellows who were tired of Wentworth’s domineering ways and resented his taking for granted the idea that he was to be the leader of the class in everything. Zim played on this string like a true politician, and several who more than half believed that the Pewee might have at least accidentally “let on” about the stolen paper swore that they’d vote against Wentworth anyhow.

On Monday morning the word was formally passed that there would be a class meeting to sit on the case of the Pewee. Already Dick had noticed the contemptuous and unrecog-

COVENTRY AND THE PEWEE

nizing look of many of his class who before now had always nodded pleasantly, or called "Hullo, Pewee!" when they met. Naturally, he felt sore.

"Wait here, awhile," said Zim to his chum who sat staring moodily out of the window. For some minutes Zim had been nervously pulling out his watch as he noticed the nearness of the appointed hour. "I've got a date with some of the fellows for a little while."

"I know, old man." Zim started; evidently Dick had overheard some of the talk.

"Well," said Conried, pulling himself together with an air of cock-sureness which he was far from feeling, "you just bet on your Uncle Dudley, and don't worry." He banged out of the door and hurried to the Recreation Hall, where the meeting was to be held.

It was a session that the class of 19- will long remember. Wentworth took the chair as a matter of course and called the meeting to order. He was "given a hand" by his fol-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

lowers as soon as he made his appearance. Without preliminary, he went straight to the story of the exam paper. He reminded the class of the risk he had run in getting a duplicate of the questions and of the fact that he had shared the copy with all hands. Then came the awful shock of the examination itself, which he said might yet bilge half the class.

“And who did the dirty trick? That double-dashed little Pewee, who had already made himself unworthy of the class by whining to the Commandant, as you all know.” Then followed the story of the negro mess boy who told of hearing the Pewee on a certain afternoon tattle about the stolen exam. And the Pewee had to admit that he was talking with old Richie that very afternoon. A storm of hisses broke forth as Wentworth finished the story of the Pewee’s crime.

“What I want to say is,” he continued, raising his hand for silence, “that a sneak like him has no place in this Academy and

COVENTRY AND THE PEWEE

in our class. The only thing to do—the only thing we can do—is to put him in Coventry and hope to the Lord that he'll resign soon.”

“Sure! Put the vote!” came from various parts of the room.

“Hold on, fellows, keep your shirts on!” cried a voice, and the rest turned to recognize Dutchy Zimmerman standing on a chair. “Just let me have the floor a minute!” and the few attempts to groan him down were hissed into silence, for as we have said, Zim was popular.

Ignoring Wentworth, he turned his back on the Chair and spoke directly at the crowd. “Of course,” he went on, “you fellows know I’m Clinton’s friend and roommate. Now I guess a roommate knows a fellow better than anyone else. If the Pewee *was* a chump I’d vote him in Coventry as quick as the rest. But,” here his voice rose, “I know he’s the squarest chap I ever ran up against, and all I ask of you fellows is to give him a square deal. Some mysterious nigger, whose name

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Wentworth promised not to tell, worked him for five dollars by telling this yarn. I tell you right now, a fellow that would refuse to use the swiped exam wouldn't tattle about it, believe me, nor a fellow who spent more than half his recreation time coaching me in English and Dago. Now I *know* he didn't do it, and I don't want you to do the man the worst injustice you can have in your power for anybody's blanked nigger yarn. And," he added, looking at Wentworth for the first time, "I tell you, Went, this class has got minds of its own, and isn't going to put into Coventry everybody that *you* happen to get sour on." He sat down perspiring but hopeful.

"Dutchy" had friends to clap his speech, too, and it was clear that he was crafty in touching on the undercurrent of hostility to Wentworth's cool assumption of leadership. Hardly had Zim taken his seat when the class were astonished to see the lanky form of



"ANY MAN WHO PUTS MAH FRIEND CLINTON IN COVENTRY KIN PUT
ME THAR TOO"

COVENTRY AND THE PEWEE

Miller, the Math-Fiend, towering in the rear of the room. Others were on their feet but sat down as Wentworth announced patronizingly, "Mr. Miller has the floor."

The Math-Fiend raised his big fist in the air, his eyes flashed, and he said:

"Any man who puts mah friend Clinton in Coventry kin put me thar too! Ah doan know what yo-all kin be thinkin' on, especially you fellows from God's country of Dixie"—here all the southerners stamped and yelled—"to be willin' to take a niggah's word second-hand as against a white gentleman with proved ideas of honah!"

At this there was a mingled chorus of jeers and applause. Several of Wentworth's henchmen sprang to their feet, all speaking at once. Cries of "Shut up!" "Give him a chance!" "Cheese it!" arose from Zim and his friends, in the midst of which the solemn Miller was pawing the air in wild indignation, unable to make himself heard. Then

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Wentworth jumped on a table and added his shouts in a frantic attempt to bring the meeting to order.

“Put the vote!” cried some of the Wentworth faction. The Chairman took the hint.

“All in favor of putting the Pewee in Coventry say aye!” he bawled, using a sheet of music from the top of the piano as a megaphone.

“Aye!” roared his followers.

“No, no!” yelled the others.

“The vote is carried!” announced the Chair.

“Naw, gowan!” shrieked Zim, “carried nuthin’! Count the votes!” But here a pandemonium broke loose that Wentworth was powerless to stop, and several healthy little quarrels broke out in various parts of the room. He got out of the situation at last by waving his hand with a shout of “Adjourned!” and jumped down from his perch red with anger.

COVENTRY AND THE PEWEE

As a meeting for putting the Pewee in Coventry it was not a shining success, and it showed, too, that Wentworth's power over his classmates had been rather overestimated, especially by himself.

On the other hand, Zim was well satisfied with the results of his trouble. He had developed enough opposition to make a Coventry impossible. Hitherto he had regarded the Math-Fiend as merely the "Rough-Neck," but after the meeting he sought him out and took him by the hand.

"Miller, you are a good, long piece of OK!"

The other bowed with clumsy solemnity, as if Zim had handed him his card, and walked away without a word. Zim was afraid he had acted a bit snobbishly toward Miller, but now he had a curious sensation of having been snubbed himself.

Meanwhile Dick had held his position at the window, looking out with unseeing eyes

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

across the inner court to the row of windows opposite. All he saw was Failure. He had had a fearful dose of ridicule and injustice since he entered, and as the class would probably do anything to please their football hero, Coventry would be the climax. The more he thought the more miserable he felt—almost tearful in fact. He wasn't going to spend four years in Coventry, either; a fellow might stick it out one year, but not four. No, sir, he'd go back home, where a fellow could get a square deal! Hang the navy anyway! He began to plan the wording of his resignation.

Just then the noise in the corridor told him that the class meeting must be over. The Pewee hastily pulled himself together so that Zim should not see him giving way to any undignified weakness. He glanced in the glass to see if his eyes looked at all red, straightened his collar, assumed a look of dignified resolution, and opened a book. In burst Zim with more than his customary violence.

COVENTRY AND THE PEWEE

“Well?”

“Here, cut it out, you look like a fifty-dollar funeral! Too bad you weren’t at the meeting,” he added casually. “Grand time. Went got up and hot-aired about you in his usual kindly way. Then I made a brilliant and captivating speech, and would you believe it—your friend the Rough-Neck got up and orated so well that the class meeting became one, long, sweet roughhouse and busted up.”

“You mean they didn’t——”

“Naw, they didn’t. We put it over Wentworth all right. His little political steam-roller’s in a ditch. In fact,” here he put on one of his ridiculous poses, tapping his chest grandiloquently, “*I* done it with my little hatchet—*and* Miller. We make a hot team, eh? Whoop! ‘Waltz me around again Willy, a-round, a-round, a-round!’ ”

Zim had a mortal fear that Dick would try to express his gratitude, and the Pewee began to look mushy and blinky as the fact dawned on him that his chum had killed the Coventry

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

plot and smashed the Wentworth machine for his sake. So with a “Don’t let my feet touch the ground!” Zim grappled with his roommate and “rassled” him all over the chairs, the table and the lockers to restore their normal manly relations.

XIII

ZIM PLANS A FEAST

AFTER the affair of the class meeting Dick would have been ashamed even to think of resigning; but although he wasn't actually in Coventry, he found the situation almost as bad. Wentworth's crowd cut him to a man, and, what was worse, a number of upper classmen, like Boothby, who had taken enough of a friendly interest in the little Plebe to nod a greeting when they passed him, were now stone-blind as far as the Pewee was concerned.

Nor were matters improved when the semi-annual report was posted, and the Academic Board made its decisions as to the fate of those who were "unsat." It was clear that the marks of the fateful exam had been "scaled up," otherwise half the class would

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

have been found hopelessly deficient in mathematics. Under the scaling process Dick received a term mark .8 higher than that of any other man who took the examination. That fact did not make any of the failures feel more kindly toward the Pewee, especially as many of them had to realize the dreadful fact that they were “bilged.”

Wentworth, of course, was unsatisfactory in mathematics, but held over. Zim, too, who had been in mortal anguish about his own fate, though he said nothing to his disconsolate roommate, was much relieved to find that his mark was high enough to hold him over also. But before the third week in February thirty-five of the class had mournfully tendered their resignations to the Secretary of the Navy and, dressed once more in their accursed “cits,” taken the cars for home. Among them Wentworth lost some of his most faithful followers, and of course he laid the entire blame for their fate upon the shoulders of the Pewee. And he was so furious

ZIM PLANS A FEAST

over the way Zimmerman had blocked his attempt to rush a Coventry vote through the class that he ceased to speak to that plump politician when he met him.

What hurt Dick more than anything else was an incident in which a girl was concerned.

After that first tea at Mrs. Winslow's in the fall, Dick had held off from society for several weeks. But under Zim's repeated urgings he had called again at the same place two or three times with his chum. Finally he confessed to Zim that he thought himself a "social lemon" and refused to go any more. He announced that he was a "red Mike"* and that was all there was to it.

He had met at the Winslow's, however, another girl—a little one—the sort that didn't make him conscious of his own smallness. She was a great friend of Elsie's and also on the verge of "coming out." Her name was Phoebe, a sweet name Dick thought, and just

*One who avoids feminine society.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

the sort of girl he would like to take to a hop sometime next year. (Wentworth could have that pert Elsie and welcome!)

As vile luck would have it, Phoebe and Elsie came sauntering down the avenue, arm in arm, one afternoon about a week after that miserable examination affair. When they saw him coming, they put their heads together and buzzed for a few minutes. Dick looked up furtively as he passed them, but oh, misery! They pointed their pretty little noses high in air, and seemed to be very much interested in something about five miles away.

Dick felt so cut up that he sneaked home, looking as if he had committed all the crimes on the police calendar. After that he had a chip on his shoulder and cultivated a grouch. While he was in this humor he wrote his Uncle Tom, unburdening his heart, and got this reply: “Dear Dick, I don’t like the whine in your letter. Buck up, or don’t write me any more. Uncle Tom.”

ZIM PLANS A FEAST

Zim was on the other side of the study table when Dick read this characteristic letter. The latter looked sheepish.

“I hope your uncle told you to cut out your grouch,” observed Zim; “you’re getting so punk that I’m going to hand in a request to change my room.”

Dick grumbled rather impatiently and went out to take a turn in the gym. He felt that his best friends *might* be a little more sympathetic! In the corridor he met Douglas. Dick looked round for a means of escape, but saw none. He made it a principle to avoid meeting everybody now, and as he hadn’t seen the Rhino since the examination affair, he took it for granted that even Douglas had gone back on him.

“Halt!” Dick’s heels clicked together obediently. Douglas looked him over critically and his eyes twinkled.

“Report to my room at once!”

“Aye, aye, sir!” Dick hated the idea of

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

giving up a plunge in the pool for another curtain lecture from the Rhino, but he couldn't disobey.

“Well,” said Douglas cordially when the two were seated with no one in earshot, “I just wanted to tell you that I know Wentworth's yarn about your giving away the exam steal is poppycock, and that I'm still spooning on you.” Dick's sullen face cleared instantly. “And I'm going to talk to you confidentially as I haven't talked even to any member of my class, because I think you'll feel better when I tell you that I have been in a good deal worse box than you and I am still in the ring. You didn't know it perhaps, but during my youngster [second] year I was actually in Coventry because I reported a classmate. I ordered him to quit making a rumpus in the section I was in charge of, I warned him that I'd report him if he kept it up, and he dared me to do it by tripping up the man in front of him. You know it was against what they called the ‘code’ here to

ZIM PLANS A FEAST

report a classmate, and my class put me in Coventry for breaking the sacred code. Even my roommate turned against me, and for almost the entire year I had to endure that silence from every member of my class. I can tell you, it was pretty hard. The next fall there was a change of feeling that came from a talk the Commandant gave the brigade on 'codes of honor,' and the class voted me an apology; but I was too proud then to let any of them make friends with me. I had learned to get along by myself and have kept that way. I reckon I was foolish at that. But you are a gregarious little beast and you can't get along all by yourself. Furthermore, you have a loyal friend in your roommate, and you owe it to him, if to nobody else, to quit playing the abused martyr and cheer up.

"Now what you need is something to get interested in. There's nothing much for a person of your build except the place of coxswain on the crew. They'll need a new cox this year, I reckon, because last year's,

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

man is getting too heavy, and it's up to you to make a good try for the job.”

“I'd thought of that, sir, but Mr. Boothby, the crew captain, is one of those who believes I——”

“Well, you go ahead and make good. He'll give you a chance if you are worth it, and I'll talk with him myself. What you want to do right away is to begin learning all you can about the job. Tell Ferguson, the boat-house keeper, what you're trying to do, and he'll point you fair. He's an old professional oarsman. Read carefully the Badminton Library book on rowing, it's got some good suggestions and one of the copies in the library has been pencilled up by a coach for the benefit of previous coxswains. Wednesday and Saturday afternoons I want you to report for boxing lessons again. Now are you game? Will you shake hands on it?”

When Dick got back to his room after a quick plunge, Zim noted with pleasure a different expression on his face and the old ring

ZIM PLANS A FEAST

in his voice. The two friends talked over the Rhino's suggestion about trying for coxswain, and Zim hailed the idea as an inspiration. The latter then confided in Dick his own secret ambition to make a place in the dramatic association, the "Masqueraders," whose committee was going to hold competitive trials the following Saturday.

Zim's ambition was quickly and easily gratified. After the trials he came running out to his friend who was waiting outside bubbling all over with the news that his original stunt had won him a place "right off the bat," and for a week afterwards could talk of nothing but the monologue sketch he had been ordered to prepare for the Masqueraders' June Week show. He was so much set up by this success and by the fact that he had squeaked by the semi-annuals without bilging, that he took to frenching again. Once, however, he sneaked into the room after taps, very much out of breath and aggrieved.

"Some one's got on to my little vaulting

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

place,” he growled. “I almost ran into a jimmy-legs and he gave me plenty of exercise getting back to home and wife.” He puffed like a porpoise for a few minutes while Dick set his teeth into the tea cake Zim had brought. “I’ve got a few more tricks up my sleeve yet, though they are more trouble.” Zim was lost for a few minutes in meditation.

“Look here!” he suddenly shouted, jumping to his feet; “I have an inspiration. We’ll celebrate my not bilging, your coming out of mourning, my making the ‘Masqueraders,’ and your future making of ‘varsity coxswain—oh, there are plenty of reasons for celebrating! Chuck that math, will you? Listen, I will a plan unfold. It’ll be a frenching party, to begin with, in order to make it pleasantly exciting, and we’ll have a merry frolic with as many regulations broken as possible!” Zim threw back his head and laughed at the prospect.

“Cut out your St. Louis product, if you want me to come,” said Dick warily, “I’m

ZIM PLANS A FEAST

always caught when I bust a regulation, to say nothing of the times I don't, and while I don't mind getting on third conduct grade again for frenching I'll be hanged if I'll get bilged for being mixed up in a beer fest."

"Angel che-ild!" mocked the other. "Have your way, Pope Pious the Punk, but listen! First course, York River oysters—great wallopers on the half-shell. Next, clear soup—or thick, I haven't decided which. Then roast corn-fed ducks from South River—mm-mm! I'll get a room in Mrs. Burrough's, next door to Carvel Hall hotel, so we can have things served hot and in style right from the kitchen of the hotel."

"Hold on now; old Smitty lives in Carvel Hall, and he'd nose us out in a minute, you bet!" Lieutenant-Commander Smith was Head of the Department of Seamanship, recently Senior Assistant in the Department of Discipline. The terror of his name still hovered about Bancroft Hall.

"Smitty be hanged. You're the darndest

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

’fraid cat, my dear Pewee. What’s the use of a frolic without the tang of danger in it? They wouldn’t bilge us anyway, even if they did catch us!”

“Well, I dunno about that,” assented Dick dubiously.

“And no one that hasn’t the nerve to french, or hasn’t the gump to do it can come to the party.”

“What of me? I never frenched yet, and I’ll get pinched sure. You’d better leave me out.”

“No, sir! That would be like having a closet without a skeleton in it. Why this party is specially to take the remains of that grouch out of your system anyway. I’ll french with you, my little one, to see you safely out.”

Dick still felt rather dubious, but he couldn’t throw any more wet blankets on his roommate’s enthusiasm. That gentleman was so much tickled over the idea that he snatched a towel from the washstand and,

ZIM PLANS A FEAST

announcing that he was Isadora Duncan, the classical dancer, bounced, flourished and gyrated about the room to the music of the "Spring Song," which he himself whistled with an expression of holy rapture in his eyes. Dick managed to trip him up against the locker, and the usual "rassle" took place. As soon as he could Zim passed the word to half a dozen of his staunchest friends and made his arrangements. The only possible hitch, he declared, was that each man would have to find a way out of the yard, and some one might have the unspeakable fate of being "pinched."

"You know it's a shame Wentworth and I hate each other," observed Zim on the evening that his great "non-reg party" fell due. "I'd like to invite him and cheer him up too; swill two grouches with one stein, as the saying is." He laughed heartily at Dick's wry face. "Went sure is unhappy. I heard that he and the Bilger had a falling out, not long ago. They say that Went up and called him a

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

blankety-blank cheat. What do you think of that? I guess Harold the boy hero has been pretty cleanly skinned by this time. Anyhow he looks sorer and sorer every day.”

“He can’t get too sore to please me!” growled the other. “Well, I’m in your hands. It’s most time to sneak, isn’t it?”

Almost at the word the bell struck 9.30, announcing release from books. The two boys slipped out into the corridor, through to the east terrace, and thence to the ground. Fortunately, it was a drizzly, dark night, as black as a pocket and most favorable for their project. They slipped silently along the river front till they gained the shelter of the coal heaps near the steam building. Still following the water, and keeping a sharp eye out for the figure of a “jimmy-legs,” Zim led the way past the boat-houses to the rear of the officer’s quarters where, in a friendly corner, Zim had hidden a piece of board.

“Donnerwetter!” he exclaimed in dismay. “I solemnly promised to bring the money for

ZIM PLANS A FEAST

the dinner to-night. The steward told me the management wouldn't allow the dinner served without a deposit—and I forgot all about it! Well, you get over quick, and I'll be there as soon as I can sneak to quarters and back again. Don't you let 'em serve any of the dinner till I come. Over you go!"

Dick swung over the wall, landed lightly on the town side and walked nervously in the shadow of the trees to the shelter of Mrs. Burrough's house, lucky enough, he thought, to get there without even seeing an officer. As he stepped inside the friendly doorway he drew a deep breath of relief. He had to admit to himself that he couldn't feel easy till he'd got back safely to quarters, but meanwhile he was going to try to have as good a time as he could.

XIV

AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL

WHEN Dick arrived, he found himself the first on the scene, but within five minutes the other six guests came together. They had hired a skiff to come to the bay side of the sea-wall and take them off. The excitement and fun of a lark, contrary to regulations, had everybody keyed up to the jolliest spirits, and what their repartee may have lacked in wit was made up in laughter. But it was high time for dinner, and no Zim!

“It would be a good one on him if *he* was the one to get pinched after all!” laughed one of the crowd. “We’ll eat his dinner anyway.”

“Give him time,” replied the Pewee, “he was afraid he’d be late, and he told me to be sure to wait for him.”

AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL

Some one then sat down to the piano and several gathered round and began bellowing the latest comic opera waltz song.

“Cheese it, fellows; pipe down, won’t you?” interrupted the oldest of the lot. “Our windows are slam up against the hotel, and some one will catch on to us. You know Old Smitty lives there, and I can just see what *he’d* do to our party!”

This advice had the effect of toning down the merriment for a few minutes, but soon it was as bad as ever. Suddenly the door-bell rang.

“Hooray, there’s Dutchy at last!” some one shouted, and all hands crowded out into the hallway to drag him in and abuse him for keeping them waiting. Dick himself opened the door.

“Zim!” he began, peering into the darkness; then his jaw dropped with terror. Oh, if it only *had* been Zim! Instead, Lieutenant-Commander Smith stood just outside the threshold, running his eye over the thunder-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

struck group, and fingering his stubby moustache and beard.

“No,” he growled hoarsely, “I have just ordered Midshipman Zimmerman to return to quarters and put himself on the report. Hm, all smoking, I see, except Clinton. Gentlemen, this little escapade will probably cost you your summer leave. For some of you it may mean dismissal. Put on your coats and caps and fall in. No talking. Follow me.”

The poor crestfallen wretches dropped their cigarettes and obeyed orders. Two by two they filed out of the house without a chance to say a word to poor Mrs. Burroughs, who, after one glance over the boys' shoulders, had fled. Smitty led the way with his characteristic important bearing and pompous stiff stride. Any other time the fellows would have winked at each other behind the martinet's back, but this was no laughing matter. Several of that miserable squad were wondering if this frenching escapade would, as old Smitty cruelly hinted, serve to

AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL

bilge them. Dick was horribly mortified. It would certainly sound foolish when he tried to explain to the home folks the reason why he had no summer leave. Hang old Zim anyway, why had he been so crazy about this non-reg party? As the squad reached the avenue, the leaders marched column right toward the Academy gate.

“I told you to follow me!” snarled the officer, and the culprits, swinging back, crossed the avenue and went slopping along straight ahead. Arriving at the next cross street, they got no orders to turn toward the Yard, but followed their leader up the brick walk leading across the campus of St. John’s College. On they went through the drizzling rain into the muddy back field of the campus, headed apparently for the marine barracks across the creek. What on earth did Smitty mean to do?

“He’s going to get a guard from the marine barracks and parade us back under arrest like deserters!” whispered Dick’s companion.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“No one but Smitty could do anything as dirt mean as that!”

“Halt!” Seven pairs of feet slapped in unison on the wet turf.

“Right face! Right dress! Now I’ll teach you to disobey regulations!” At this Lieutenant-Commander Smith stepped forward and pulled each nose in the line! Dick remembered that it had been said that Smitty had insanity in his family. What were they to do?

“Listen, I will sing for you.” The poor demented officer started off in a high nasal voice parodying a vaudeville song, “You were happy till I met you!”

Dick suddenly snorted and, jumping from the ranks, he fell upon the crazy officer, bowling him over.

“Oh, you Zim!” he screamed.

“It’s Dutchy himself!” was an answering shout as the others caught on and made for their tormentor.

“Hold on, quit, fellows, or I won’t let you

AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL

have any dinner!" gasped Zim. "You're spoiling my make-up!"

"Well, you hand us that dinner right off, or we'll paste the life out of you!" threatened one who was sitting on "Smitty's" stomach.

"It's all ready and waiting, kind friends," chirruped Zim, readjusting his whiskers and scrambling to his feet. "Come on!"

When they regained the street they reformed as a squad, with "Smitty" at their head, and marched back to the house, where they found Mrs. Burroughs smiling a welcome. She was "on," as Zim had to explain.

Then Zim removed his whiskers and took the head of the table on which the oysters lay already spread, "each as big as a baby," the master of the feast proudly declared. If anything had been needed to make the dinner a "go" Zim's stunt would have been more than enough. There never was such a good dinner, there never was such a running accompaniment of noise and laughter from

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

eight boys with nothing worse than excitement and fun to intoxicate them. Zim explained that his imitation of Smitty was the stunt that he had used with success before the Masqueraders' committee, and had asked them to say nothing about it.

“Where did you get your uniform, Dutch?”

“My dear uncle's cast-offs.”

“Where in thunder do you keep them?”

“Ah, that's a secret that even my little roommate Bright Eyes hasn't caught on to. I won't give it away because you'd all swipe my patent and that would be an end of it. Let me tell you, gents, hereafter I french in classy style!”

“Look here,” exclaimed another suddenly, “old Smitty might turn up yet!”

“Calm your throbbing and fearful heart,” replied Zim waving a carving knife at him grandly. “I have the honor of knowing his angel daughter Gracie, and she let me know when he would be away. He is in Washing-

AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL

ton to-night at the dinner of the Marine Engineers.”

The joyous dinner held on till after midnight, and then it was agreed that it was about time to “beat it back to quarters.” The rest of the crowd went down the street to the wharf to find their skiff, while Dick and Zim sneaked quietly behind the hotel to scale that part of the Academy wall directly ahead of them instead of going back by the roundabout route that Dick had come by. Zim said that, instead of putting on his disguise again, he was going to french over the wall with the Pewee—for the sake of old times—by the backyard of Herr Strübel. It was raining so hard, he said, that the watchmen would be surely under cover and anyone, even Dick, might be trusted to french it safely.

On gaining the street just outside the Yard, Dick bumped into an unsteady figure emerging from the shadows and knocked him over.

“What on earth!” exclaimed Dick, stoop-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

ing over the motionless figure. As the two lifted the helpless man he turned an unconscious face toward them.

“It’s Wentworth!” exclaimed Zim, “and full as a tick, too!”

There was no denying either statement. Dick let go in disgust. He couldn’t help feeling a fierce delight in seeing his enemy in that disgraceful condition, for no amount of sobering could get him into the Yard on his own legs before morning, and the great Wentworth would be hopelessly disgraced, and probably dismissed.

“Well,” said Zim sharply as he noticed Dick’s snort of contempt, “we can’t leave him here, you know.”

Dick hadn’t cared a hang whether Wentworth slept on the wet sidewalk all night or not, in fact, he rather preferred that he should, but Zim’s words made him ashamed of himself.

“No, of course not,” he said hastily; “but what in thunder can we do?”

AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL

Zim pondered. "We'll have to take him with us through Strübel's back yard. Once we lift him to the top of the wall we'll just push him off. A drunk can fall any distance without getting hurt. Then we'll have to worry him back to quarters somehow. Good Lord, if they catch sight of me in this uniform and recognize Dutchy Zimmerman, it's all off!"

It was a slow process. Zim smeared a handful of melting snow from the gutter over Wentworth's face to revive him enough to get him on his feet. Then by much coaxing and shoving they got him across the street and into the bandmaster's yard.

Up went a window. "Who is dere? Or I'll shoot alretty!"

"Schweigen, bitte (quiet, please)," croaked Zim, "Zimmerman!"

"Ja, ja!" laughed Strübel, withdrawing his head, and shutting the window. It was a twenty-minute job to get Wentworth upon the wall, from which Zim shoved him with as

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

much consideration as if he had been a bag of meal. The two rescuers then jumped after and looked hastily round. Not a “jimmy-legs” could be seen.

“Great luck!” whispered Zim. “Now for a long haul!”

By this time no amount of pinching or cold water could restore any animation in Wentworth.

“They’ll pinch us sure!” grunted Dick as they started off with their burden.

“The chances are against us,” agreed Zim, “but there’s nothing else to do.”

It was a long haul, indeed, before the two got their burden unobserved around under the lee of Bancroft Hall by the wide terrace that faces the bay.

“Now, what?”

“I’m going to try to re-rig my whiskers and bluff it into quarters to Went’s roommate and wake him up,” answered Zim. “You stand by the remains.”

AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL

Dick waited beside Wentworth's prostrate figure, his teeth chattering with the wet and cold. The minutes dragged like hours. Two bells struck—one o'clock. Then about fifteen minutes later, though it seemed to Dick about a week, Zim reappeared from one of the windows on the level of the terrace accompanied by Wentworth's roommate. All three worked together and step by step bore the sleeping Wentworth to the top of the terrace. Then, at the risk of a broken neck for everybody concerned, they shoved and dragged him along a plank that had been placed across the yawning "moat" from the terrace to the window. This took twenty minutes more of the hardest kind of work. Once in, however, it proved an easy matter for the two friends to slip up the stairs to their room on the third deck. Thanks to the downpour and some miracle of luck, they had escaped unobserved.

Before they left, the roommate, an ardent

"PEWEE" CLINTON, PLEBE

partisan of Wentworth's, eyed them in an embarrassed way for a moment. Then he said:

"Say, you fellows certainly did the white thing, all right!"

XV

THE PLEBE COXSWAIN

THE next morning's bugle call turned Dick out with a nasty cold as a souvenir of his struggles with Wentworth in the rain, and he felt so dull and sleepy in the afternoon recitation that he called down on himself a sharp reprimand from his instructor for inattention and unmilitary bearing. Wentworth passed him in silence that afternoon, crossing over to the other side of the road to avoid him.

"Lot of gratitude *he* has!" grumbled Dick to his chum. "Virtue is its own reward, all right, and I'm sick of being virtuous."

Zim laughed. "There's nothing that makes a man more grouchy than to have to admit to himself that a fellow he hates doesn't deserve to be hated and has put him

“PEWEE ” CLINTON, PLEBE

under a big obligation, besides. It takes some time to get used to the idea. But I'm counting on Went's waking up one of these days to what a fool he is, and I think he's beginning now. I heard to-day that he went out of his way to insult the Bilger good and plenty; it was probably he who got Went full last evening, so there'll be a quiet little scrap somewhere to-night."

"Shucks! I don't believe there's a single good streak in that Wentworth," retorted Dick savagely. "He's fifty-seven varieties of chump."

Zim laughed good-naturedly and changed the subject by talking of the Masqueraders and of the monologue which he was to get up. This brought back the memory of the night before, and Dick laughed himself back into good humor at the picture of the disconsolate parade in the rain at the heels of the redoubtable "Smitty."

"By the way," he broke off suddenly,

THE PLEBE COXSWAIN

“what in time did you do with those uniform things and the make-ups? I saw them on your chair last night, but there was nothing lying round at inspection this morning.”

“Swear you’ll never tell?”

“By the Beard of the Prophet!”

“Behold then!” Zim went into his little bedroom, followed by Dick. The former then lifted back the bedding and along the seam of the mattress next to the wall showed a neat slit, fastened close by tiny hooks and eyes. A layer of the stuffing had been removed and in its place, neatly folded, lay the uniform coat together with the cap insignia and strap which Zim had fastened over the anchor and plain strap of his midshipman’s cap.

“Down here is a pretty assortment of make-up boxes and some extra fine whiskers,” said Zim. “When I french now, it will be a lot more trouble, but it’ll be done in artistic style. There are four officers here

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

that I can make-up to look enough like in the evening to fool the jimmy-legs at the gates. You watch me!”

“Your place is doing a head-liner on the vaudeville circuit,” laughed Dick. “I’m not going to help you any more with your English, math or Dago. The sooner you bilge, the better for your career.”

“I once thought so myself,” sighed Zim, “but you don’t know my old man! He’s counting on you to pull me through this place, and you’ll be sorry you ever got on his wrong side if you don’t make good. You bet your life I don’t write home anything of this masquerading business. Why, the old man would go up in the air so high he’d be mistaken for an aviation meet!”

.

The last week in February was unusually and unseasonably warm and the balmy temperature held on into the middle of March. The early spring weather soon brought out

THE PLEBE COXSWAIN

the crews. For weeks Dick had "boned" all the information he could lay his hands on either in hand-books or from the wisdom and experience of the boathouse keeper. When the first call for candidates was issued, he reported for the position of coxswain. At first he was ignored. The other crews were supplied with coxies till it came to the Plebe shell, and the only other candidates were so much heavier than the Pewee that he was finally ordered to take the position on trial. Unfortunately, many of the Plebe oarsmen were of Wentworth's gang, and some of them grumbled openly against having him. The coach, noticing the disturbance, stepped in and, ordering silence, commanded Dick to take the place assigned him.

Dick was alternately hot and cold with anger and mortification, but he set his teeth in the determination to make good in spite of everybody. Accordingly, when his turn came, he snapped out the orders he had care-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

fully rehearsed beforehand, and got his men afloat in quicker time than any other cox but the 'varsity.

Then, day after day, during those early weeks of warm weather, Dick took his shell out on the course, with his whole head and heart concentrated on the idea of learning his job and being the best cox on the river.

From the first day he learned that the position is not all marshmallows and cream. The big men who “do the work” act as if they despised the little cox as only a necessary nuisance at best, and Dick had to take a good deal of ill humor with good nature. However, he proved himself so ready and willing to turn his hand to odd jobs and errands for the others that he soon overcame a good deal of the prejudice against him. He learned, too, the necessity of keeping his eye on the steering apparatus. More than once he had to spend laborious minutes untying knots in the tiller ropes that practical jokers had put there. And before he took

THE PLEBE COXSWAIN

his crew for its first spin he had unlearned that rooted and popular superstition—that a coxswain must sway back and forth in time with the stroke of the boat. Then, with practice, he caught on to the “feel” of his rudder, the amount of pressure needed in making a turn properly or in holding a course against the leeway of tide and wind.

In the boathouse he would humbly go and fetch the stroke’s sweater for him, but in the boat he knew he must be a real boss, and sang out his orders like an admiral. He listened intently to the coaching in order to apply the principles to his own shell. Still there was no particular chance for him to distinguish himself, and all he could be thankful for was that he had no trouble in holding his seat in the Plebe crew. During these weeks his class averages slumped down to a bare satisfactory. He ate, talked, and dreamed nothing but rowing.

Wentworth had come out for the crew, and from the first held a seat in the ’varsity shell.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

After the first week three were transferred from the Plebe crew to the 'varsity, for the champion crew of the preceding year had nearly all belonged to the graduating class. They had left six seats to be filled, and much trouble cropped up in the effort to fill them. The coxswain was a veteran, but he was admittedly too heavy for his position. The fact, however, that he had had experience, and was a friend of the captain's besides, made his seat secure. The other positions were the scene of constant shift.

As it never rains but it pours, three weeks after practice began, Arnold, the only other veteran oarsman beside the captain, had a bad fall on the floor of the gym which put his knee out of business for the season and transferred him to the hospital. The coach began to tear his hair at the prospect.

Soon there came the reaction after a too early spring. Icy northwest winds roared down the river, roughening its surface with white caps. Then came a snowstorm, fol-

THE PLEBE COXSWAIN

lowed by more northwest gales, bringing the intensest cold of the winter. The calendar seemed to have slipped back into midwinter. Over two weeks passed in which not a shell could venture out. Then, although there were occasional tastes of good weather, just to make the contrast more doleful, the rest of the spring was a miserable failure. The cold of the earth and water, combined with the warmth of an April sun shining somewhere behind the wind clouds, bred a constant succession of blinding fogs, which came sneaking in from the bay and shut out everything from sight.

The history of that year's boating at the Academy matched the weather. Early in April a preliminary race was pulled off with an amateur crew that came down from Baltimore. Under ordinary conditions the race would have been a walk-over for the middies, but this year it was a hard-fought struggle to make the finish line a half length ahead. After that there was some talk of actually

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

disbanding, but Captain Boothby, foaming with rage though he was, swore mightily that his crew would yet retrieve itself if he had to kill every one of the ding-batted, good-for-nothing sons of hookworms in the crew squad to do it. The make-up of the 'varsity was changed and rechanged, but nothing seemed to lift the “hoodoo.” The men were green and seemed to lose confidence in themselves after a poor beginning. The coach exhausted all his stock of language and all his experience on them, but with discouraging results.

Though Dick kept his seat in the Plebe shell, he had no races to engineer except the occasional tryouts between the various crews on the home stretch, and as the best Plebe material went to the 'varsity, what was left gained no glory for the Pewee. One of these contributions to the 'varsity was Miller, whom Dick interested in rowing in order to have him on the Plebe crew, but who proved too successful to stay there.

Day after day, during that April, the Pewee

THE PLEBE COXSWAIN

barked his orders through his little megaphone, shivering in the cold rains or equally disagreeable fogs that drifted up the river from the bay. Meanwhile, every race that amounted to anything was lost by the luckless 'varsity, and the gloom in the boathouse got so thick one could have cut it with a knife. There was just one race left after the first week in May, the biggest event of the rowing season, the race with Columbia.

Reports had come south that the New Yorkers had had bad luck also this season, and kept alive a spark of hope that by a miracle the navy might pull the event and make up for the humiliating season by one great victory. But, as the season advanced, the Columbia crew showed up better and better.

"'Nuthin' in it for us unless them Columbia fellers all get scarlet fever so's they have to cancel the race," observed the boathouse keeper with a melancholy wag of his head, "'I never seen such a rowin' season here!'"

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Wentworth was so angry at being a member of such a crew that it took all the moral persuasion of everybody from the coach down to keep him from carrying out his threat of chucking it and going into the baseball squad. He swore with an injured air that he'd rather be a sub on the winning nine than be a member of a crew that was the laughing stock of the Academy.

Dick gnashed his teeth over the situation, but he was helpless. He used to dream again and again of discovering a new secret of rowing, that suddenly made a winning crew out of the losers, but there was always the cold fact to be waked up to in the morning.

One afternoon early in May Dick was steering his shell round the corner of the sea-wall, following the wake of the other crews, who were well in the lead because the Plebes had been delayed in starting. Dick was calculating how accurately he could weather the turn with the slightest possible pull of the tiller ropes and the least expenditure of oar pull.

THE PLEBE COXSWAIN

Suddenly a loaded coal barge appeared around the angle of the wall, coming from behind a coal shed and bearing diagonally down upon him. She was being carried along by a launch away aft on her starboard side, the coxswain of which could not see the coming shell, nor could he have done anything to avoid a collision if he had. Dick's heart jumped into his mouth for it looked like a certain collision. To back water would have been fatal, there was nothing for it but to round the barge.

"Give way hard!" he yelled. The boat shot across the huge buff bows of the barge.

"Five and seven, trail oars!" The two aftermost oars on the starboard side swung alongside just in time to avoid having their blades smashed against the barge. The next instant the great hulk was upon him. Dick reached out, caught the wash-rail of the barge, kicked the stern of the shell free, and the astonished crew looked up at their coxswain clinging to the bow of the barge which

“PEWEE” CLINTON. PLEBE

had swept past so closely that it had carried away the rudder. A stroke or two to clear the course of the launch, and then there was a shout of laughter, for the Pewee looked for all the world like a monkey clinging to the bars of his cage.

It was some time before the Plebe crew got its coxswain installed again, shipped a new rudder, and was out for its daily spin. Dick had so much chaffing on his acrobatic stunt that he wasn't quite sure whether he had made himself ridiculous again or had done the best that could have been done under the circumstances. But when the little torpedo boat of the coach tore past, he was immensely pleased to hear him shout through the megaphone:

“Well done, Plebe Cox!”

And, better yet, when they were all in the dressing rooms he came up to Dick and ordered him to report for the 'varsity on the morrow. Dick could have lain down and died for pure joy.

THE PLEBE COXSWAIN

“The cox is the only man we haven’t changed,” said the coach to the captain, with a note of bitterness in his voice, “and a change there can’t make matters any worse!”

XVI

THE RACE WITH COLUMBIA

Dick could scarcely wait till Zim came in from a Masqueraders rehearsal to tell him the news. Of course he was delighted, but he pooh-hoohed the idea for the sake of teasing his chum.

“What do you want to bet on that rotten crew for? It’s the disgrace of the Academy. Why, next year when they’re looking for a ’varsity cox they’ll turn you down because of the hoodoo of this year’s crew.”

“Aw shucks, you think there’s nothing worth while except making a show of yourself in the Masqueraders!”

At this Zim squatted on the floor, adjusted imaginary tiller ropes, and gave such a side-splitting take-off of a coxswain during a race that Dick howled with laughter.

RACE WITH COLUMBIA

“St-r-r-oke! Str-r-r-oke!” Zim croaked hoarsely. “*Eyes in the boat! More beef—people! Get into it now! Shoot those hands away!*”

“Cheese it, you Dutch monkey,” advised Dick, “don’t you wish you were a ’varsity athlete like me?”

“The only kick I have,” he added soberly after a minute, “is the necessity of looking into Wentworth’s face. He sits just behind Boothby, the stroke, you know. ‘Harold, the Boy Hero’—dog-gone his supercilious mug! I wish I were big enough to paste it!”

“Pshaw, never mind old Went; he’ll be civilized yet if he can only stay here long enough. Only yesterday he came to me of his own accord and paid me all he had borrowed. I nearly fell dead! And did you see the Bilger after that little affair of honor they had behind the old steam building? Old Went must have pounded Bullen’s frontispiece all right. They haven’t spoken now for weeks.”

"PEWEE" CLINTON, PLEBE

"Zim, you are the little Bright Eyes of the gossip brigade, all right!" laughed Dick. "Now you watch me win the Columbia race. I'll hypnotize my bunch of huskies so that they'll *have* to win!"

"I hate to wake you up from your pipe dream," answered Conried, "your crew couldn't beat Vassar, and everybody knows it."

Dick stepped into the 'varsity shell for the first time with a little nervousness, but with every faculty keyed up to make good. His lightness was immediately felt to be an improvement, and the coach had small fault to find with his head-work. Every afternoon he salted away the comments of the coach in a little notebook and pored over them at night. To his relief, Wentworth gave no trouble by sneering remarks or disobedience of orders, he simply ignored the presence of the Pewee.

The days drew near to the race with Columbia. The hopes freely expressed that the New Yorkers would all die suddenly of the

RACE WITH COLUMBIA

plague were not fulfilled, for the visiting crew appeared in due time, for a few days' practice on the midshipmen's course, and looking very healthy indeed. They were a fine-looking set of oarsmen, and on the river they soon showed that they knew their business very well.

"All over but bringin' in the remains!" growled the boathouse keeper, scowling at the enemy over the bowl of his pipe. "Them fellers could lick us with a 100-yard handicap!"

Dick, who had overheard this remark from the philosopher, felt his own heart drop down into the pit of his stomach. He knew that the old fellow was right. That week's *Bulletin* came out with one of those red-hot editorials which the editor-in-chief turns out over a team that is in the last ditch.

"Let the whole Brigade stand for our oarsmen, who, in spite of the worst luck in the history of rowing at the Academy, are striving their hardest for victory. Saturday's

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

race is with Columbia, the hardest rival of all, *but we can beat them! Never say die!*”

Dick read it and tossed the paper aside. It was tragic, and this hot-airing only made it worse. Even Zim, who had opened his mouth to say something in derision of the crew, shut it again, seeing how miserable his chum really felt.

Just then the door opened, admitting—of all unexpected persons—the Bilger! According to the sacred custom, whenever an upper classman enters a Plebe’s room, the lads rose at attention and faced the wall.

“Aw chuck it, fellows,” the Bilger was oily with patronizing kindness, “I’m talking biz. Here’s a time when all of us in the Brigade has got to stand by the crew, show the Columbia bunch that we ain’t afraid of ’em, and we still got confidence in our boat, no matter what’s happened. Now them fellows can’t find takers for their money, and it’s a disgrace to the school. I’m getting a pool together to equal what they’ve brought down,

RACE WITH COLUMBIA

and it's every man's business to chip in five dollars anyway to show his loyalty to the school."

"I'm not betting, sir," said Dick curtly.

"Me either," echoed Zim.

"Aw, be a *sport!*" sneered Bullen, "Gowan!"

When he saw at last they were firm, he consigned them both to a warm climate and went on up the corridor. The Bilger's argument, Dick learned afterwards, had more effect elsewhere, and, much as it hurt to give up money on a hopeless thing like the Columbia race, many a fellow let it go as a sacrifice he would make out of loyalty to the navy, and Bullen collected a heavy sum.

The evening before the race the last blow fell. Wentworth received a telegram from his mother saying that his father was at the point of death. To Zim, with whom he had for some time renewed friendly relations, he explained that his father had been poorly for some time, but this dreadful announcement

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

was wholly unexpected. He hurried to get the necessary permission from the Superintendent, pack his grip and rush for the next train. Was there ever a team with such a hoodoo? No loss could have been harder to bear in the crew except that of the captain himself. It was all over but the shouting!

The coach remarked sarcastically that it wouldn't make much difference, he supposed, if he picked a substitute by lot, not excluding the coxswain. However, the biggest man in the second crew was chosen and fitted into Wentworth's place. To Dick it was all as tragic as if he was bearing on his own shoulders the responsibility of the honor of the entire navy. He knew that a win was impossible, but what was worse was the certain prospect of a long, long reach of open water between the stern of the Columbia shell and the bow of the navy's. From the Columbia point of view it was going to be a ludicrous walk-over.

Meanwhile Zim had been buzzing around

RACE WITH COLUMBIA

with a very important and mysterious air for several days prior to the race. He was up to something, but very secretive about it. Finally, when he came down to the float to shake Dick's hand for the last time before the race, he was fairly bursting with something.

“Never mind what happens in this foolish race, Dick, old man, I'll cheer you up when it's over!”

Dick wondered whether it was another of Zim's practical jokes, but his head and heart were so full of the coming tragedy of the race that he promptly forgot about Zim and fell to scrutinizing his steering gear with a microscopic eye to make sure that nothing had happened to it over night.

The Columbia crew knew all about the dismal history of the midshipmen's rowing season, culminating with the loss of Wentworth the evening before, and their coxswain commiserated with Dick on the fact.

“Rotten hard luck you fellows have had!”

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

he said. The remark was perfectly courteous, but Dick felt unreasonably angry because to him it sounded like “it’s a shame to take the money.”

In fact, there were no unfounded hopes either in the crew or among the navy crowd. The few canoes and the tug *Standish* that were already out in the river for the race contained not more than a sprinkling of midshipmen and their friends. The rest preferred to watch the track meet and the ball game which were going on at the same time, and in both of which events the navy had a good chance of winning. The navy oarsmen themselves realized all this and were a very glum lot as they took to the water, in striking contrast with their cheerfully confident rivals.

To add to the misery, the day’s weather was the last spasm of the wintry spring. A raw breeze came in from the bay and gave the lie to the May sun overhead. In the distance between a hazy sky and a gray sea hung

RACE WITH COLUMBIA

a fog. The rival crews rowed out in the bay and took their stations near the lighthouse with their bows pointing up river. Near the county bridge lay the two cutters, with their signal pennants flying, marking the finish of the course. The crews of the two shells chafed their arms as they lay on their oars, and cursed the biting wind. Usually there is no delay so deadly long, and with so little apparent reason, as that which attends the start of a boat race. Perhaps in this case the navy officials thought that the sooner the thing was over the better, for to Dick's relief the preparations were got over in a business-like way and in a comparatively short time.

"Are you ready?"

"Ready," answered the coxswains.

Bang! At the report the oars dipped and flashed, and the two shells leaped forward. Dick's eye took in a great deal in the first minute. As he was chanting the beat of the oars, he saw that the New Yorkers, while pulling the same kind of stroke, were pulling

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

fewer to the minute than the midshipmen and walking away from them. The new substitute was plainly very nervous and was splashing badly. The others were working at their best, but they had a hopeless expression on their set faces which showed that they were fully aware that they were already beaten. Dick let the others pull ahead still farther without quickening his stroke, for the coach had told him to manage for a strong finish anyway. The coach had told him much else besides which Dick was busily turning over in his mind.

Another few seconds and he noticed that the fog was drifting in before the light southerly wind, coming diagonally across the course. Already the left shore of the bay was lost in a white bank. “That confounded bay fog is coming in again!” he thought, “in another minute there won’t be anything in sight on the river.” Already the Academy buildings were gone, and the mist was wet on

RACE WITH COLUMBIA

the navy gunwales. The coxswain of the Columbia crew, now well in the lead, turned his head to note the struggles of the navy oarsmen; and, as he took in the situation, he gave a little laugh which Dick's ears caught with full appreciation of what it meant. But just then he had business in mind which allowed him no time for resentment. As the finish boats were already showing faintly in the incoming sweep of the fog, he hastily took a "sight" of the sun, already showing red through the mist, where it stood over the right shoulder of Stroke as a guide to steer his course by. The next instant they were lost to sight. In another minute the black hulks of the *Santee* and the *Hartford* on one side and the white sides of the *Olympia* on the other were swallowed up. By this time the Columbia crew were two lengths ahead, and Dick could just see ahead of him, well off his starboard side, the Columbia coxswain twisting his head in bewilderment.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

Dick had had many an unpleasant hour in these fogs before, but now he took back every impatient thing he had ever said about them.

“We’ve got them beaten!” he exclaimed, under his breath, and pausing in his hoarse chant. “We’ll pass them in the fog. Now hit it up!”

At the word, Dick quickened the time, hissing the beats under his breath in order to give no unnecessary sound for their rivals. Now the fog was so dense that one could scarcely see beyond the length of an oar. The men caught the hope of a chance to win, and put more steam into their pull. On they went into that blank wall of fog, with Dick glancing from time to time at the round red ball of the sun overhead in order to keep it just over that point of Boothby’s shoulder that he had measured with his eye. Somewhere off at the right he heard strong language hurled at the fog and at the Columbia coxswain. Clearly the rival crew were now too badly lost to keep ahead at anything like



TO MAKE THE FINISH DICK MADE HIS MEN PULL WITH EVERY
OUNCE OF POWER IN THEM

RACE WITH COLUMBIA

their former speed, and the click of the navy oarlocks was too far off to give any useful idea of the course to the bewildered coxswain. Dick almost laughed aloud. By George, the navy was going to win *this* race!

Then for a while he eased up the stroke a few counts, as he could get no idea of distance when everything, as he told Zim afterwards, "looked like the inside of a custard pie." Soon he caught the misty outlines of the *Standish* waiting near the finish, just as he was almost upon her, and then the masts and flags of the finish boats themselves. He found that his guess-work steering had led him a little, but not far, astray of his true course; but it was clear steering now!

To make that finish Dick made his men pull with every ounce of power in them. The next moment the navy friends on the *Standish* were astonished to recognize in the ghostly incoming shell the middy crew. Whewee-ee! shrieked the whistle as the navy oars flashed across the finish. The fog was thinning now,

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

but for some minutes the air was full of confused whistles and warning shouts.

As the last stroke was finished and the crew lay panting on their oars, Boothby reached out a big hand and grasped Dick's so that it hurt.

“Good for you, Pewee, it's your race!” and Dick felt almost hysterically happy. Oh, if he could have Zim to “rassle” out his surplus feelings! Suddenly the dark nose of a little torpedo boat was seen, gingerly picking a course in the thinning fog.

“The *Manly*!” cried some one, naming the coach's boat.

“There's the crew!” came the answering yell from the laughing group on her deck, followed by our “Four N yell” and the shriek of her whistle. As the *Manly* slid abreast, the coach bawled his first joyous shout since that ghastly rowing season began. He was calling for a “three times three for Clinton,” and Dick's ears felt pink and warm in spite

RACE WITH COLUMBIA

of the fog. There were long-drawn shouts of "Pewe-ee!" answering from the rail of the *Standish*.

"Look, what's that astern?" cried Miller. Sure enough, as the stern of the *Manly* passed it revealed the Columbia shell with its nose smashed. Evidently in the fog it had run down the torpedo boat.

"The Columbia crew is below, drying off!" bellowed some one on the *Manly* through a megaphone, and then the little torpedo boat slipped away in the direction of the boathouse.

Almost as suddenly as it had come up, the fog broke apart; the wind had shifted, and soon the filmy shreds of mist were dissolving before a westerly wind.

"Give way!" ordered Dick, and the victorious crew swept around and sent their shell skimming toward the boathouse. The news had spread rapidly that the navy crew had won in the fog, and a surprised and de-

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

lighted crowd of midshipmen were cheering the crew by the time it swung alongside the float.

“Clinton! Clinton! Clinton!” rang the cheers, and Dick’s heart thumped with such joy that he forgot all about that sacred ceremony that awaits the coxswain of a winning crew. Suddenly Boothby picked him up by the arms, another seized his legs, and with a “yo heave ho” Dick went flying end over end, striking with a tremendous splash in the water. Wow! he came up spluttering and gasping, for the water was mighty cold. There was another splash accompanied by a howl of delight from the crowd on the float, and as Dick was swimming ashore he saw the immaculate manager, uniform and all, smite the water as well. As soon as he crawled out on the float Dick was seized by a group of his classmates, headed by the joyous Zim, who rushed him into the dressing room and rubbed him down with such enthusiasm that he had to yell for mercy.

RACE WITH COLUMBIA

Soon the defeated crew came in to offer their congratulations to the winners. They were evidently much sorer over the damage done to their shell than over the fact that they had lost the race by the "fluke." Their captain especially was a good sport, he had won too many times to begrudge this race.

"Good boy!" he laughed, shaking the Pewee by the hand. "You got us all right in that fog. It's navy's race!"

Dick tried to hunt up the Columbia coxswain and say something graceful and commiserating, but the latter ducked round the corner and made for the hotel as fast as he could. It was clear that he felt himself to blame and was too sore to have his successful rival say anything to him.

It need hardly be said that there was high jubilation at quarters that night and that no heart beat happier than the one beneath the ribs of one Richard Clinton, the Pewee.

XVII

THE BILGER BILGES

At Quarters that evening it was unanimously decided that, as the race was so much of a fluke, the proper sporting thing was to call all bets off.

Promptly at 9.30, when study period gave place to recreation hour, the room of the Bilger was besieged with a joyous crowd of midshipmen who had bet on a hopeless thing and were now clamoring to get their money back. After one or two interviews that sporting gentleman tacked a sign on the door, "Bets returned to-morrow after Chapel."

On Sunday morning, however, several of the brigade were astounded to see Bullen calmly walking out of the Yard in his "cits," carrying a suit case. Chapel service came and went, and the now anxious bettors

THE BILGER BILGES

clustered once more around the door for the Bilger's room. The sign had been removed, so also was every evidence of Bullen himself. The feelings of the crowd were not improved when Boothby came ambling along with the information that the Columbia captain told him yesterday that they hadn't brought down any special sum from New York to be covered.

"He's either gone on leave, or resigned in a hurry," said someone in the group, when someone began wondering again about the Bilger.

"If he resigned, the Supe and the Commandant were so glad to have him go that they probably got the consent of the Secretary of the Navy by telephone and packed him off like a shot." At this the dark looks and suspicions grew black. Suddenly Wentworth came striding down the corridor, dressed in his "cits" and carrying his grip.

"What's up?" he asked. When they told him he swung his fist and swore.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“I’m pretty wooden, perhaps, but I can see through a hole. Do you know what that fellow’s done? Well, that telegram saying that my father was dying was a fake. I hustled home and found my old governor smoking a cigar and reading a paper with his feet cocked up on the fender. That dog-gone Bilger has a brother in my town, and he probably sent the telegram—it was dictated over the ’phone—the idea being to get me out of the boat to make dead sure that the navy crew would get walloped. Now that the navy did win, he’s beat it with your money.”

It sounded all too probable, and there was a ghastly silence. Then one happy-go-lucky first classman remarked that he didn’t begrudge what he lost if it cost him only that much to get the Bilger out of the Academy and out of his class. At this there was a chorus of approval and the crowd melted slowly away.

As it turned out, the guesses were close

THE BILGER BILGES

to the mark. Bullen's resignation, approved in due course, and sent on its way, had not reached Washington by the time he had left the Yard. Not caring to wait till his game was discovered, he had got permission to break out his trunk from the basement of Quarters, and then coolly walked out on Sunday morning, never to return. As the Academic authorities could not recognize the matter of betting, Bullen's resignation was simply changed to dismissal. The rascal got off with his haul, but the Bilger was actually "bilged" at last!

Zim, who could always be depended on to be on hand when there was anything "doing," touched Wentworth on the sleeve and asked him for a few minutes' private talk in his room. The few minutes lengthened into all the intervening time before dinner call. When they came out to formation, Zim's round face had the smile of victory, while Wentworth looked very thoughtful.

"Say, what's that good news you were

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

going to tell me?” inquired Dick suddenly that afternoon. Up to that moment he had thought of nothing but that race in the fog.

“I don’t have to tell you now,” laughed Zim, “because the navy won after all. Fact is, I’ve forgotten what it was anyway. Oh yes, here it is; you know that charmer ‘Cutie’ Kenyon?” Miss Kenyon was a confirmed flirt of sixteen, much admired by a number of the Plebe class. (Dick had said recently that he thought her prettier than Phoebe and Elsie put together.) “Well, she told me the other day that she thought you looked ‘*real* sweet’!”

At that Zim caught his roommate’s solid geometry on the top of his head, and he intimated that it felt very solid indeed. Only an officer’s tread outside prevented the usual roughhouse as a consequence.

Monday afternoon after drill came the class meeting for electing the class officers, notably the president. It was merely a form,

THE BILGER BILGES

for everybody knew that Wentworth would win hands down. In fact there was no other candidate in the field worth considering from the point of view of ability to poll votes. Dick felt so warm-hearted after the glory of that race that he decided that he would be generous enough to show himself at class meeting and vote for his enemy. Zim urged it as good policy, too. Moreover to Dick's utter astonishment, when Wentworth passed him that Monday morning, he spoke to the Pewee in the pleasantest manner imaginable.

When the meeting was all ready to be called to order, as Wentworth was the candidate for president, of course, someone else had to take the chair. To Dick's surprise, as soon as the two were in Recreation Hall, Zim coolly left his friend and walked up to the table that generally served as the chairman's desk. Then he promptly called the meeting to order.

“Fellows, I'm acting as temporary chair-

"PEWEE" CLINTON, PLEBE

man of these festivities because I've got something important to talk to you about. It won't take long to tell it.

"The last time there was a class meeting in this room we were fighting over a question of giving one of our number Coventry." Here Dick turned red and tried to slink down in his chair out of sight. "Now, I asked you fellows," continued Zim, "to take my word that our classmate was not guilty of what he was charged with, and a majority of you stood by me. Ever since then I've been doing a lot of gum-shoe work, and now I have the goods. You fellows who voted with me have a right to know, and those who didn't ought to know the facts.

"After a lot of trouble I found out the moke who told Wentworth. His name is Sam Nelson, of the mess boys, and you fellows mustn't let on or he'll lose his job. I told him I'd keep his villainy quiet provided he'd tell me everything, and I swore I'd report

THE BILGER BILGES

him if he didn't. I've got a signed confession now in my hand for the benefit of this class. I'll tell you what it is in brief, and anyone who wants to look at it afterwards can see it.

"Bullen, who had a grudge against the Pewee, offered the coon fifteen dollars to tell Wentworth that yarn—you know—about Clinton's blabbing to Richie. The nigger got sore on the Bilger because he couldn't collect more than two dollars from him for the job, and let on to me a good deal faster than I expected.

"Then I found out how the math people caught on to the swiping of the paper without firing the nigger. Nelson, like a fool coon, sent his pants to the yard laundry and it got reported in a roundabout way through one of the laundresses. Of course she didn't know whom they belonged to, they were a passed midshipman's cast-off working pants anyway. Now that's the whole story in a nutshell, and I can prove every word of it."

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

At this time there was a storm of applause, suddenly interrupted by the tall figure of Wentworth waving his hand for silence.

“Mr. Wentworth has the floor!” yelled Zim.”

“Fellows,” said Wentworth, “Dutchy told me all this only yesterday, but for a long time I knew that I had been in the wrong about a fellow-classmate. He and Zim here did me a mighty good turn long ago, but I was too soreheaded to admit it and be decent. Now that I know that I was lied to by that moke and all on account of Bullen, I want to do the squarest thing I can here on this floor where I did my best to have you put Clinton in Coventry.

“I think I’ve figured it out why the Bilger was sour on the Pewee—I mean Clinton—from the start. Clinton’s principal who failed, Foster, was as easy to skin as I in the days when we were candidates, and he used to play poker with us Saturday afternoons; so when Foster failed and Clinton

THE BILGER BILGES

entered, the Bilger got sore at losing his graft. *Half* his graft I should say, for let me tell you, he may have cleaned you fellows out of some money on that race, but you have no idea what he has stung me for!" There was a great laugh at this frank admission.

"Now," he continued, turning so that he could look at the place where Dick sat, "I want to tell Mr. Clinton before this class that I apologize to him heartily and ask him to forget that I ever did him dirt. You all know that he won the Columbia race for us, and so far he's had nothing but knocks from all of us.

"Fellows, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to propose the name of Clinton for president of this class."

At this there was general cheering and applause, for Wentworth never showed himself manlier than in that frank apology which must have cost his pride a big struggle.

Zim hesitated and looked toward Dick.

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

The latter stood on his chair. “Mr. Chairman!” Zim instantly gave him the floor in a rattle of hearty applause from the class.

“Fellows,” he said hesitatingly, “I’ve heard this story for the first time here from Dutchy Zimmerman. “I’m more pleased than I can say to be put square before you all, especially before Wentworth, whom I have misjudged as much as he has me. Now you don’t want a—a—*Pewee*”—there was a roar of laughter at this—“president of a class of this size, though I thank Mr. Wentworth heartily for the honor of the nomination. Zim, I mean Mr. Chairman, I move that Mr. Wentworth be elected president of the class of 19— by unanimous vote.”

Zim’s face beamed with delight at his friend’s coming so gallantly to the mark. There were enthusiastic cheers and applause for Dick’s speech too, and as soon as the noise had subsided Zim shouted, “Moved and seconded that Mr. Wentworth be unani-

THE BILGER BILGES

mously elected president of the class of 19—
All in favor say aye!”

There was such a thunderous aye that Zim evidently didn't consider it necessary to call for the noes, for he jumped down from the table and made for his friend. He reached him just in time to see Wentworth gripping Dick's hand, and the two, football hero and little "Pewee" stammering something incoherent to each other.

"Let me get into this!" laughed Zim, giving a hand to each, "what's the matter with us three for a combination, anyway!"

XVIII

JUNE WEEK

THE remainder of that term, a little over two weeks, was for Dick the happiest period of his life. Somehow everything went just right. Wentworth was true to his word, and did his level best to "square things up with the Pewee." His classmates and admirers took the cue from him, and instead of the contempt and indifference Dick had been accustomed to so long he came as near being lionized as a Plebe can be. A large number of fellows came up and shook his hand, telling him how sorry they were that they had misjudged him. Among these was Boothby, the crew captain, who though on the eve of graduating, told Dick that he wanted to do *some* spooning on him even if it was rather late.

JUNE WEEK

There were some mighty complimentary things in the papers, too, over that Columbia race, and the subsequent issue of one of the big New York weeklies printed a snapshot of him climbing out on the float just after his ducking, with the crowd laughing and yelling around him and Zim in the foreground with his hand stretched out to pull him in. My, that feeling of "making good" was fine!

All this fame, however, was nothing to an account that appeared in the Skowhegan weekly paper. Dick was looking over the issue following the race when he burst out with a "Gee Whiz!" He was going to add "Look here, Zim," but in that instant he decided that he'd rather his teasing chum did *not* look. There was a long "spiel" spread over the greater part of the front page, concerning Dick's work in the Columbia race and his character and attainments generally. In the middle of it was his smug High School graduation picture, "looking

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

awfully kiddish and fresh,” thought Dick shamefacedly. Then as he went on through the glowing account he turned redder and redder. It was a regular funeral oration,” he thought, and yet it seemed to be written by someone who had inside information. Certainly Uncle Tom would never write a thing like that, he wouldn’t have allowed it to appear if he had seen it first. He was a crank on the subject of “self-advertising.”

“Pass that over!” said Zim, who had been watching Dick out of the corner of his eye with evident amusement. “I think I see the Pewee’s earnest countenance on yonder printed page!” He managed to snatch the paper out of Dick’s hand before the latter could prevent him.

“Get away, now,” he warned, waving a foot at the indignant subject of the article, “I rather like the style of this!” Then he began reading aloud choice flowery bits, hooting all the while at the suffering Pewee.

JUNE WEEK

"I'll see that this gets reprinted in the *Bulletin!*" Zim exclaimed with enthusiasm.

"Oh, say!" expostulated Dick helplessly. He knew that the *Bulletin* editors liked nothing better than to reprint complimentary morsels culled from home papers about individual midshipmen, and adorned with derisive comments.

"Who's your friend on the paper? Don't you recognize the style?"

Dick shook a mournful head and made another futile dive to get the paper out of Zim's hand.

"You ought to," reproved Zim, edging toward the door, "after all the coaching in English I got from you——!"

"Zim, you didn't——? You *rascal!*"

Bang! The door slammed in Dick's face as Zim dived out into the corridor, paper in hand. For several days thereafter he kept Dick desperately worried over his threats till the *Bulletin* finally appeared without the

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

dreaded quotations, when the latter realized that his obstreperous roommate had kept the “obituary” to himself after all.

The week of Annual Examinations arrived shortly after the middle of May. Dick, however, had weathered everything successfully enough to escape having to take any of the examinations, and he put in the spare time in coaching Zim, who, as usual, had to take them all. Exam week went by, and Zim came out with a little more than bare satisfactory in everything, a result which made him perfectly happy and contented.

Then came the excitements and glories of “June Week.” Of course, at that season the first classmen are the heroes, for it is they who are graduating, but it means almost as much to the Plebes. In a sense they graduate, too, for between the despised position of Plebe and the dignity of “Youngster” there is a great gulf fixed.

Immediately after Zim’s eulogy appeared

JUNE WEEK

in the Skowhegan paper, Uncle Tom wrote this letter to his nephew:

DEAR DICK:

Who perpetrated that thing? You need me to take the conceit out of you, and I'm going to come down next week with your aunts and see what the Academy looks like.

UNCLE TOM.

Aunt Hester and Aunt Jennie wrote too, but their letters were fat enough and enthusiastic enough to burst their envelopes. During the latter part of Annual Exam Week, all three "folks" arrived, and as Dick had no examinations to worry him, he was free to show them all the sights of the Academy. He told them the story of the Herndon Monument and Lovers' Lane, showed them the draped coffin of John Paul Jones, and expatiated on the figureheads of the Constitution in a way that would have qualified him, in Zim's words, "to conduct a rubber-neck wagon." In fact, Dick had carefully

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

crammed the guide book before his family arrived.

As soon as Zim was free, he turned to, as well, on the entertaining committee; and though he had no guide book information to spout on cannon and monuments, he made such a hit with uncle and aunts that his chum finally told him to clear out and not rob the lone nephew of the affection that belonged to him.

Early the following week came the Masqueraders' entertainment, and of course all hands to whom Zim was the entire show were there. Nor did he fail Dick's topnotch expectations. Zim was not only the hit of the evening, but he so completely outclassed all the rest of the performers that the enthusiastic audience refused to let him go without many encores. He appeared in several characters, first as a discipline officer, then as a French professor, again as a head of department, and lastly, as a mess-boy, with appropriate monologues for each part and a take-

JUNE WEEK

off of a definite personage that the middies could recognize in each case. He wound up with a topical song, which Dick had helped him write, and which proved a howling hit.

Dick was so proud of his friend's success that he nearly burst with pent-up admiration as he sat and watched him from the front row of the gallery. And the two aunts told each other earnestly that Dicky's friend, Mr. Zimmerman, was certainly "very gifted." As for Uncle Tom, he nearly laughed his head off before Zim finally left the stage.

Friday of June Week brought graduation.

It is a custom at the graduation exercises which are held in the Armory, for the first class, who are seated, and the rest of the brigade, who stand at parade rest behind, to applaud each man as he goes up to get his diploma from the Secretary of the Navy—or whoever the dignitary happens to be. The amount of applause shows to the audience the popularity of the man. When Dick learned this, he began to worry about what

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

treatment Douglas would be likely to get from his classmates, and he took advantage of Boothby's spooning on him to ask him kindly if he'd "see to it that the Rhino gets a good hand. He's been a mighty good friend to me," pleaded Dick, "and his mother's coming all the way from Tennessee!"

"Well, Pewee," answered the first class-man with great dignity, "you are the ratiest, cheekiest, freshest upstart of a Plebe I ever saw. The idea of your telling the first class how to behave! Beat it before I annihilate you!"

Dick "beat it" as directed, but he knew from the way "Bug" made his high-sounding remarks that he was not angry at all. When graduation morning arrived and Douglas, who was one of the "star" men—standing almost at the very head of his class—was called up to receive his diploma and the handsome sword awarded for "excellence in gunnery," he received such a round of applause

JUNE WEEK

that he was completely taken aback. Were these the same fellows that had put him in Coventry? He flushed with surprise and pleasure, and scarcely heard the nice little complimentary speech the Secretary of the Navy made him when he handed him the sword. As he turned he saw a little figure in rusty black sitting in the front row of the audience, wiping away tears of joy and pride. Then he smiled with appreciation and a quiver of his own eyes as he looked back into the brigade, where a delighted little Plebe in the rear rank was still whacking his hands together for all he was worth.

That night came the June Ball, the crowning festival of Graduation Week. Uncle Tom gave a dinner at Carvel Hall before the hop, and it was a wonderful success. This, too, in spite of the fact that every tradition of "rates" was violated by the fact that Rhino Douglas, looking happy as a bridegroom, and in all the glory of his new uniform, was there with his mother, hobnobbing with four

“ PEWEE ” CLINTON, PLEBE

Plebes—at least, four who had been Plebes up to that morning—and seemingly enjoying it. These four were Wentworth, who, the ladies declared afterwards, had the most charming manners they ever saw, Miller, Zim, and, of course, the Pewee. It might have been a hard combination to swing had it not been for the irrepressible Zim, who, fresh from his triumph in the Masquerader Show of a few days ago, was in his most rollicking vein, and told the most wonderful string of stories that kept the table in a gale of laughter—and for that matter everybody at the neighboring tables who was near enough to hear.

After dinner all hands followed the crowds going down to the Armory. Douglas had never gone to the hops during his four years at the Academy because he said that it was silly for a grown man to spend a whole evening shuffling over a floor. But this time he raised no objection whatever. Dick wanted to go because it was the first hop at which

JUNE WEEK

the erstwhile Plebes were allowed on the floor, and he wanted to enjoy the new privilege, while Wentworth and Zim, who were great "fussers," were eager to dance the evening through.

But neither of them, dancing with the prettiest girls as they were, was enjoying himself a bit more than Dick, standing alongside the gawky Miller among the "stags" and just looking on.

"This is a fine old world," he said to himself, "and no fellow ever had a finer bunch of friends. I wouldn't be anywhere else in the world than right here and right now in this Academy!"

Then he thought, with a leap in his heart, of the summer cruise that would begin on the morrow. The ships were going to the Azores, to Gibraltar, Marseilles, and to London. He'd have a chance to see some of the most interesting parts of the old world, travelling on a Dreadnaught, and dressed in the uniform of the United States Navy!

“PEWEE” CLINTON, PLEBE

“By George, what don’t I owe Uncle Tom for getting me that appointment to the Academy and making me work to pass the exams!”

At this thought he left the floor and went up into the crowded gallery to find the “folks.” Next to them he found Douglas and his mother. The Rhino was looking thoughtfully and with unseeing eyes upon the whirling crowd of dancers below. The three ladies were having a delightful time together, commenting on the gowns of the girls and admiring Wentworth’s faultless dancing and handsome appearance.

“Wow, it’s hot in here!” muttered Uncle Tom. “Hester, Jenny, I’m going out on the terrace. Come on, Dick!”

The two strolled out on the terrace and sat on the wall, looking at the path of moonlight that shimmered across the bay.

“Dick, you’re taller than when you left home,” observed the older man.

“Two inches, sir,” answered Dick proudly.

JUNE WEEK

“And a hangsight better in the chest and shoulders,” commented the other approvingly.

“That’s due to Douglas, sir.”

“And you have grown in other ways, as I hoped you would, thanks to Douglas and Zimmerman——”

“And Uncle Tom,” added Dick.

“So that,” he chuckled, not heeding the interruption, “if you keep on, the time *may* come when you won’t be a ‘Pewee’ in any sense of the word.”

BOOKS FOR BOYS

David Crockett, Scout

By CHARLES FLETCHER ALLEN

A NEW volume in "The Trail Blazers Series." It sets forth all Davy's versatility and recounts his many exploits in the East and in the new Southwest. It tells of him as Indian fighter, bear hunter, statesman, and defender of the Alamo. Davy had a keen sense of humor and a lovable nature, which at once endear him to the reader.

Colored frontispiece and three illustrations in black and white by Frank McKernan.
12mo. Cloth, \$1.50.

The Boy Scouts of Birch-Bark Island

By RUPERT SARGENT HOLLAND

Author of "The Man in the Tower," etc.

THIS book tells the adventures of a troop of twenty-five Boy Scouts who left New York about the middle of June and camp on an island in the Connecticut River. Their camp is just above a sandy beach and is surrounded by a ring of silver birches, which gives the name to the island. The Scouts pitch their tents, explore the island, and draw maps of what they discover, lay out a baseball field, hold water-sports, and go on scouting "hikes" across the island and along the mainland.

With colored frontispiece and five illustrations in black and white by
Herbert Pullinger. Decorated cloth, \$1.25 net.

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
PUBLISHERS PHILADELPHIA

"HEROES IN AMERICA" SERIES

By CHARLES MORRIS

Author of "Historical Tales," "Home Life in All Lands," etc., etc.

These volumes, devoted to the men and women who have made the history of our country, are inspiring for the young person and interesting for the old. They are valuable for history, geography, and patriotic teaching, especially for the growing boy or girl at that impressionable age when biography commences to be of interest.

HEROES OF DISCOVERY IN AMERICA

These stories of the explorers of the American continent, from Leif the Lucky to Robert B. Peary, are full of thrilling incident, exciting adventure, and dauntless heroism; of dangers finely braved, of sufferings bravely borne.

HEROES OF PROGRESS IN AMERICA

This volume deals with the records of famous Americans from the colonial days, beginning with Roger Williams, and including statesmen, writers, inventors, scientists, reformers, not forgetting the noble women who have contributed their share to American progress.

HEROES OF THE ARMY IN AMERICA

From the great George Washington through a long list of men such as Israel Putnam, John Stark, Ethan Allen, and so on, down to Nelson A. Miles, the lives of these brave, strong-charactered men are here sketched in a clear, concise manner, their important achievements narrated, and their place in the building of American history fairly given them.

HEROES OF THE NAVY IN AMERICA

Devoted to our foremost naval heroes, from the early days of the government down to the present time. The book embraces accounts of all the heroes, from the days of Paul Jones to Dewey in Manila Bay and Hobson in the Harbor of Santiago. It is a spirited little volume containing a great deal of history put up in attractive form.

*Fully illustrated. 12mo. Uniformly bound in cloth.
\$1.25 net per volume.*

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
PUBLISHERS PHILADELPHIA

Fascinating Stories of Science

The latest achievements in exploration, steam locomotion, invention, electrical mining, engineering, etc., are the subjects handled so instructively and entertainingly.

The series complete in ten volumes, as follows :

Romance of Modern Mechanism	}	By Archibald Williams
Romance of Modern Exploration		
Romance of Modern Mining		
Romance of Modern Steam Locomotion		
Romance of Modern Invention		
Romance of Modern Engineering	}	By Edmund Selous
Romance of the Animal World		
Romance of Insect Life		
Romance of Modern Electricity		By Charles R. Gibson
Romance of the Mighty Deep		By Agnes Giberne

Profusely illustrated from latest plates.

Present a Set to Your Son or Daughter

The most valuable supplementary reading they could have in connection with their school work, containing, as they do, such a rich store of practical information on the greatest accomplishments of the hour in science and exploration. Graphically told in story form in a way that awakens and holds the interest, and as fascinating as the best fiction.

Handsomely illustrated. Attractively bound.

\$1.50, net, per volume.

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY, PHILADELPHIA

General King's Military Novels.

THE GENERAL'S DOUBLE. IN SPITE OF FOES.
THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER. MARION'S FAITH.
THE DESERTER. FROM THE RANKS.
CAPTAIN BLAKE. UNDER FIRE.
RAY'S RECRUIT, AND A TAME SURRENDER.
RAY'S DAUGHTER.

Illustrated. \$1.25 per volume.

TRIALS OF A STAFF OFFICER.
KITTY'S CONQUEST.
STARLIGHT RANCH, AND OTHER STORIES.
TWO SOLDIERS, AND DUNRAVEN RANCH.
A SOLDIER'S SECRET, AND AN ARMY PORTIA.
CAPTAIN CLOSE, AND SERGEANT CROESUS.

Paper, 50 cents; cloth, \$1.00 per volume.

LARAMIE. WARING'S PERIL.
A TROOPER GALAHAD.

\$1.00 per volume.

FOES IN AMBUSH.
Cloth, \$1.25; paper, 50 cents.

TROOPER ROSS, AND SIGNAL BUTTE.
FROM SCHOOL TO BATTLE-FIELD.

Illustrated. \$1.00 per volume.

(Edited by)

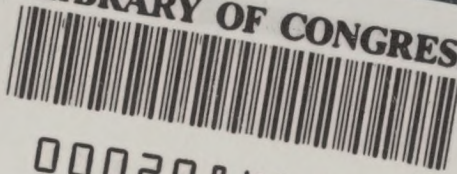
THE COLONEL'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.
AN INITIAL EXPERIENCE, AND OTHER STORIES.
CAPTAIN DREAMS, AND OTHER STORIES.

Cloth, 75 cents; paper, 50 cents.

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY, PHILADELPHIA

OCT 23 1912

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0002084632A